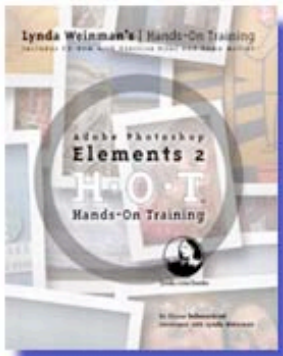


The Macintosh Professional Network Presents

macCompanion

Your Guide To All Things Macintosh

November 2003 Issue 5 Volume 1

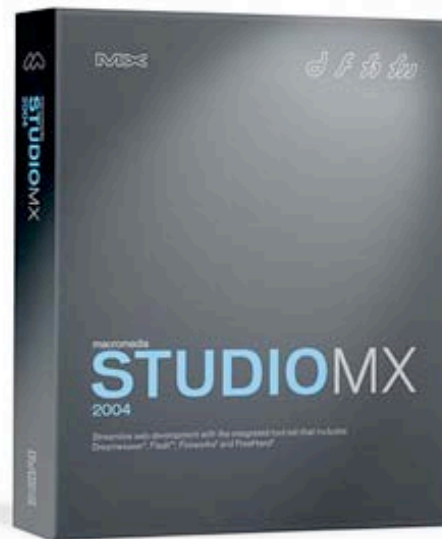


HARMONI

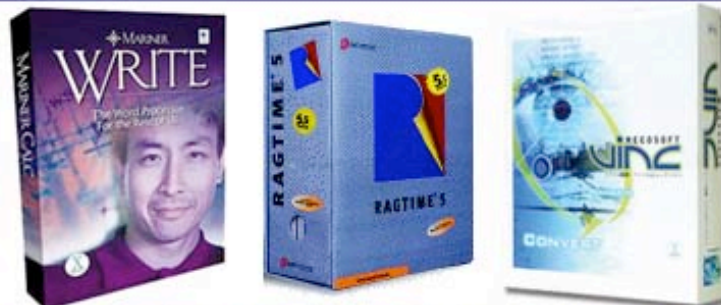


G3

Feature Reviews



Macromedia Looks To The Future with Studio MX 2004



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And our special thanks to those who have allowed us to review their products!

Letter From the CEO "Island of Serenity" – for now

By Robert Pritchett

I'd like to point you to some other articles posted on the Internet that affect the Macintosh-community. These come from both regular trade journals and also from other websites. Some are favorable, some are not so. One of them has the line, "Island of Serenity". Can you guess which one (hint: not ours)?

Rob Enderle's eWeek article: <http://www.eweek.com/article2/0,4149,1362343,00.asp>

Walter S. Mossberg Wall Street Journal article: <http://ptech.wsj.com/ptech.html>

Pogue 's Panther NYTimes article:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/23/technology/circuits/23stat.html?ex=1067572800&en=81e858bada35d411&ei=5062&partner=GOOGLE>

Mike Wendland's Mac-Mike article:

http://ej.typepad.com/macmike/2003/10/panther_ive_got.html

AlanLu's iTunes article: <http://www.apple->

[x.net/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=574](http://www.apple-x.net/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=574)

George V Hulme's InformationWeek Security Flaws article:

<http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=15800094>

Leander Kahmey's Wired article on the person who got the Virginia Tech SuperComputer going:

http://www.wired.com/news/mac/0,2125,61005-2,00.html?tw=wn_story_page_next1

And the most excellent article by Daniel H Steinberg at the MacDevCenter on Confessions of a Switcher at

http://www.macdevcenter.com/pub/a/mac/2003/10/29/osxcon_g5cluster.html

There is so much press out there about Apple that it is creating a regular buzz and hum worldwide and even in many places that ordinarily have in the past participated in Mac-bashing. It is truly astounding and gratifying at the same time.

And the buzz is about: iTMS (iTunes Music Store) for Windows, the release of the new Mac OS X – Panther and no viruses known yet that affect the Mac OS X environment and vulnerabilities and that Super Computer at Virginia Tech! And the best part is that folks who have been suffering for the last 22+ years from foibleware (computer products that just don't work) are sitting up and taking notice! And buying.

But what really got my attention was this one:

MacNN's report on Xten for Mac OS X VoIP product: <http://www.macnn.com/news/21731>. See, I used to work for the folks that do reviews of VoIP products and have their award logos pasted on <http://www.xten.com>, so this has special meaning to me. I hope to review the X-Pro product for Mac OS X soon. For the longest time, Macs were considered "persona non grata" in the VoIP industry. For example, I was the only one in that Lab who was openly "pro-Mac". Truly the tides have changed for the better! Check out the somewhat silly Flash promo for the SIP phone at http://xten.com/promo/x-pro_episode1.html.

If you do your work – or try to – on non-Mac platforms, why not come join us on our own little "Island of Serenity"? We can help.

Now while I've still got your attention, please also take time to check out our Business, Computer and Publishing affiliates. When you buy something, that helps our bottom line too.

And please, spread the word about macCompanion and what we do.

Your Ad could be here!

Letter From the Editor

By Robert Pritchett
Acting Editor-in-Chief

Here we are with the November issue of *macCompanion*. It is so gratifying to see the article contributions by staff members and guest writers who desire to become a part of our all-volunteer staff. They have done some marvelous work, notwithstanding personal, computer system and network challenges that seem to beset all of us of late.

Please take a moment and read their excellent articles and reviews, then send us your comments to Feedback found at <http://www.macompanion.com>.

And why we have your attention, please take time to peruse our affiliate offerings also found online on our site, maybe drop a coin or two on our donate link (to help keep us alive) and grab a PDF copy of our monthly issues. We also accept sponsorships!

And as you enjoy the published articles, please let your friends, family and associates know our location online. We also have some excellent, yet friendly, competition and we hope you read them too.

We want the world to know we are here, in an effort to help everyone learn more about products and topics that work well with what we consider to be one of the best systems on this planet today!

We thank the Manufacturers, Public Relations teams, Authors, Publishers and Software Developers who were gracious enough to let us review their products for this issue. I am always amazed at their generosity, as they know full well we tend to be rather honest in what we post.

The folks who choose to create for the Macintosh Community are rather prolific in producing products. It is real challenge to try and keep up with all the innovation that is constantly churning our direction. This is a great experience! And it is just as challenging getting it out to you, our worldwide readership.

All published faults found are our own and we apologize in advance for those.

Now on to what you really came here for; reading what we have to say about some great products, so you can decide if they are something you want to purchase. We think you will!

Views from the Ivory Tower

By Ted Bade

Apple Music - Perhaps the Beatle record label "Apple Records" is right, Apple Computer Corporation is getting too much into music. I don't think so. In my opinion, what Apple Computer Corporation is doing something a lot more spectacular. They are slowly shifting how computers are perceived; what once was a tool of the elite business person, is now a center (aka "digital hub"), of entertainment for the average home. Rather than watching silly sitcoms on TV, we might be playing games with people from all over the world, reading about things that interest us, working on our photo collection, or simply surfing for fun.

You more than likely have heard that Apple released a new version of iTunes that now works on Window's based machines, which gives our Wintel friends a chance to shop at the Apple store and enjoy the benefits of iTunes. Will this be a successful move for Apple, or, as so many are saying, is it a good idea that happened too late? Only time will tell.

In late October, Apple announced that in the 3.5 days since the release of the new iTunes version over 1 million copies of the Windows version were downloaded. They also indicated in that same time over 1 million songs were purchased. The press release from Apple <http://www.apple.com/pr/library/2003/oct/20itunes.html> wasn't clear, but I suspect that the number of downloads is a total, not a iTunes Windows-specific number. A good start to iTunes move into the Windows market.

The new version of iTunes and the Apple music store add a number of interesting features including gift certificates and adding audio books to the store. Along with the new release came a deal with AOL letting their members set up instant access to the music store as well as an announcement of a 100 million song give away done in conjunction with Pepsi. For all the details on the new iTunes version, the new Apple Music Store offerings, and all the contest details visit Apples iTunes music store area: <http://www.apple.com/itunes/> and <http://www.apple.com/itunes/store/>.

More for the Music Store User - Now that the digital music revolution is under way, expect artists to do exclusive releases at their favorite digital music store. I have heard of two such announcements.

The first concerns Country/Rock singer Jimmy Buffett who will release two of his upcoming CDs at the iTunes Music Store almost a month before the CD will be available to purchase. Find the announcement and some Buffett music at: <http://www.mailboatrecords.com/>.

The second is that a Sarah McLachlan EP will be released for download at the iTunes Music Store again about 30 days before the CD is available for purchase. For details check out: http://www.billboard.com/bb/daily/article_display.jsp?vnu_content_id=1995375.

Doing this gives Apple Masters (and potential Apple Masters) a means of getting something back for their support of Apple in the way of sales and PR. It also provides people who have shifted to digital music purchasing a benefit, not to mention the PR value for iTMS itself. (iTMS = iTunes Music Store; you'll probably see a lot more of that abbreviation in the future!) Perhaps

someday Internet music stores will even take the place of record labels...

Should we be sad or thrilled? - In early October, Motorola Corporation announced that they will be separating their semiconductor division (the part that makes and develops electronic chips including the PowerPC) as a separately traded company. The announcement, http://www.motorola.com/mediacenter/news/detail/0,,3358_2778_23,00.html indicates this will be a good thing for everyone; what would one expect from such an announcement?

Motorola was once one of the top chip producers. Over the past few years, in my opinion, they seem to have lost interest in the chip market, something Intel is probably pleased about. I realize that like Apple with regard to Windows, Motorola fell far behind Intel in the computer chip market. But unlike Apple, they didn't continue to put the "pizzaz" into their products. Perhaps this spinning off of the company will refocus them. Don't forget that a major part of Motorola semi-conductors are imbedded chips in things like cell phones and other advanced electronic devices.

We will have to see how it works out for G4 manufacturing. Lets hope that our good friends at IBM will work on a low power chip for Apple to replace and upgrade the G4, should this action by Motorola cause problems with G4 chip manufacturing.

Everyone wants to be part of a super-computer - Although Dell Computer Corporation might have lost in the bid for the Virginia Tech supercomputer, they were selected by the Texas Advanced Computing Center at the University of Texas. Apparently the Texas cluster consists of 300 Dell computers that provide 3 TeraFlops (versus the 17 plus of the Virginia Tech cluster). If you read any of the early information released on this cluster you might have heard that the cost was significantly more then the Virginia Tech project, (\$38 versus \$5.2 million). However, the price tag is not for the cluster only, it includes other items such as additional hardware for other departments and operational costs over a five year project.

So all you Mac users out there that didn't manage to get rid of your old Macs, give this cluster thing a try! Heck, if we all got together on the Internet, we might be able to make the most powerful cluster in the world. To paraphrase a old SF show - "a rag tag group of outdated computers...." ;-)

Where oh where will (the Eastern) MacWorld [Expo] be? - There certainly has been a lot of confusion surrounding a very old Macintosh tradition, that of the East Coast edition of the MacWorld Exposition. For reasons best known to themselves, Steve Jobs and company want the Expo, or some form of show, to be in NYC where it has been for the past few years. However, many other people feel that Boston is a better location. Among other things, vendor costs are less in Boston, and I personally feel that Boston is a more friendly town for attendees. (My personal opinion based on years of living in Connecticut and being able to easily go either way).

The powers that be at IDG World Expo <http://www.idgworldexpo.com/>, announced they decided to go through with Macworld Exposition in Boston. Apparently the renamed NYC show this past summer (CreativePro) had some success, but not enough to change the minds of the IDG people. (You can read the press release at: http://www.businesswire.com/cgi-bin/f_headline.cgi?bw.082903/232415118 .

What should we expect from this show? I expect Apple will have either a very small presence or none at all. But we can expect to see a lot of vendors related to educational, scientific, and most importantly, the Macintosh enthusiast! I expect we will see many more smaller vendors that couldn't afford NYC, and possibly even some peripheral vendors, (those that supply computer generic things, not specifically for the Macintosh).

To keep yourself informed of what is happening with this summer's MacWorld Expo, visit the web site: <http://www.macworldexpo.com/>.

The new IT buzz phrase "Consider a Mac...." - I was stunned and to be frank, a bit amazed, when the IT manager at my day job mentioned the interesting articles in a professional IT magazine concerning the Macintosh. He's a dedicated LINUX guy, very disenchanted with Microsoft. He recently passed the article along to me (one I had mentioned the article in the September edition), and said the writer had some valid points. What has impressed me most is that he keeps bringing it up, as he reads each new pro-Apple article he finds.

To some degree, the articles are affecting his opinion. Perhaps he might even consider a Macintosh in his future purchasing considerations, who knows. I expect these articles are having similar affects in other smaller institutions.

What I find most interesting about the situation is that as Apple is becoming more and more well known for developing fun but useful applications and machines for the home market, the business market is becoming more and more interested. Not about these digital hub applications, but about the stability and security inherent in Apples products. The important thing is that the slew of pro-Macintosh (specifically OS X and the G5), articles continue to be seen in magazines, newspapers, and on the Internet.

In one recent article, Wall Street Journal columnist Walter Mossberg offers an interesting perspective, which I definitely enjoyed. To paraphrase his excellent article, he says that the Windows platform is riddled with security leaks, susceptible to many forms of malicious programs, and requires patching regularly to keep up with all the problems. He goes on to suggest that computer users can escape these conditions by moving to the MacOS X platform. Cool!

The article is too well written to simply describe. Take a moment to jump to the following link and read the entire article. It is really worth the read: <http://ptech.wsj.com/archive/ptech-20031023.html>. Then pass it along to your IT guy!!

Panther - the New Cat in Town - As we go to press, Apple has just unleashed Panther. While I wait for my copy to arrive, I began looking for articles on it. Suggestions, problems, tricks and so forth.

MacWorld magazine's online site has a really good article you might like to read. Its called "Panther by Numbers" and was written by Jason Snell. Check it out at: <http://www.macworld.com/2003/10/features/panther/>. This article is followed by another page of interesting information and trick concerning Panther, written by several well-known Mac related authors.

Also the producers of the very well known Internet newsletter, TidBITS, is starting a new series of smaller books called the "Take Control" series. These electronic books are shorter than a regular paper book, less expensive, and focused on a specific topic. They released two such books to coincide with the release of Panther, one on upgrading to Panther and one on using it. To learn more about them visit: <http://www.tidbits.com/takecontrol/>.

I am sure the folks here at *macCompanion* will provide their own viewpoints on this new version of OS X as they get used to it and how well it works. I'm sure I'll have a few comments on how well it works with my G5.

So until next month - Happy Computing ;-)

Real World

Toast 6 Plus Hints—Burn all the Custom Disks You Wish

With a Few Music File Format Information Freebies
Harry {doc} Babad and Derek Caudill

Recently, Derek and I both separately responded to a call for help by a Mid-Columbia MUG member. We thought our answers might be of use to you, our *macCompanion* readers, so we are sharing them.

Help! iTunes is messing with Toast™. Be gone, iTunes™!

For those readers using Jaguar, iTunes is the default selection for playing and burning CDs. To change the default to Toast for burning both audio and data CDs, turning off iTunes. Pathway: Go to Systems Preferences > CDs and DVDs, and select Toast Titanium for either or both media. There are other good options in this preference pane, depending on your computing work and music combo work habits.



A Toast 6 Idiosyncrasy—Copying CD track play lists from the Toast 6 Window

Harry {doc} Babad

If you want to copy the Track Names and Times from Toast 6's window, you must first unclick the track list and select "all" to choose it again. Only then can you copy and paste into your CD database. This is a significant departure from Toast 5, in which you could copy the list when it appeared after checking the Internet from Toast (CDDB). This extra deselect-reselect dance step was unnecessary in earlier versions of Toast.

If the CD is one you've not previously worked with in Toast, when the Toast dialog box asks you, click the CDDB box. Lo... all the tracks will be named and their play times assigned, but only if the CD is in the master database! The name of the CD and name of the lead artist are now

also listed in the Toast window. I use this technique to index the tracks on all my CDs. (Anyone want to know how many versions of the St. James Infirmary Blues I have in my collection? Just ask my FileMaker Pro database.) A simple means of adding the track information to your CD database for indexing is to copy the CDDDB identified information from the Toast window to a database created for that purpose. I always use the "best" quality setting for burning music, which results in a slow burn speed. I know digital technology allows multiple successive copies without degradation, but does my burner know that?

Making Music CD Samplers From Your Own CDs [Toast 6]

Although there may be other options, as described by Derek in the next section, I always want my samples to have named audio tracks. Indeed, I always create jewel case booklets for these samplers. They contain the detailed discography for each selection. Picky... picky... picky...

For each *owned* audio CD you want to sample, use the following steps to get only the tracks you want: Drag the CD you've initially selected into the Toast main window. If the tracks aren't named, you will get a window asking whether you want to search the Internet for more information [e.g., CDDDB.] For making audio samplers, I store the cuts I want on that sampler CD in a folder or a CD-sized partition that I place at the desktop level. Then, I select each cut I want, and, by going to the "Disk" menu items, I choose Extract Audio. The selected files are downloaded to the desktop or in the selected folder or volume. (As an aside, I find Apples "Disk Copy" preferable to Toast's for making partitions.) When I have what I want from the first CD, I repeat the process with other CDs until I have a bit less than 700 MB of audio files, or until I've filled the CD-sized partition.

To create the sampler, I drag the selected audio files the files back into Toast, give the CD a name [e.g., Blues Sampler #1], use drag and drop to arrange the cuts to my liking, and burn the new sampler disk. Create a CD label, make a pretty booklet, and there you be. By copying the track information from the Toast window into your CD label template, you can know exactly what is in the sampler disk.

I have not successfully found a more direct way to transfer selected tracks from one or a group of CDs (after opening each CD by double clicking on its icon), even when using both of my burner's drives.

Apparently, the tracks you see listed when you double click on an audio CD or by dragging a CD into Toast's main window are finder artifacts (pseudo aliases). Even when dragged to and arranged in a desktop folder, they will not burn to create an audio CD. (Derek noted that these are simply icons created by the Mac OS to represent files on the CD. The actual visible audio files on the CD are in AIFF format. The icons you see in a CD window are just 0 Kb files to show that the CD does contain tracks. Programs that play CDs or that can "rip" from CDs can "see" the original source files on a CD. The Mac OS Finder can just see the placeholders. The tracks on a CD are not documents, as would be regular files. However, the Finder can tell that they are separate files, even if it cannot access them directly. That's why when you drag and drop a file from a CD, you cannot convert or burn it: it's a 0k placeholder file. It is like having an alias that doesn't point to anything.)

If you want to convert AIFF files to mp3, once you have the AIFF files ripped iTunes or an alternative downloadable shareware program can do that. Version Tracker <www.versiontracker.com> and the Mac Update site <www.macupdate.com> both contain many shareware programs that are designed just for audio track translation. Some programs also have audio editing capabilities, but that's another article. QuickTime, of which I (Harry) am not a serious user, can also inter-convert audio formats.

Making Music CD Samplers From your Own CDs [Toast 6]

Derek Caudill

To burn ONE audio CD with tracks from multiple CDs, while not ripping the individual tracks to your hard drive, I use the following process.

1. Insert the first audio CD that has tracks you want on it.
2. Open Toast.
3. Click the Audio Button. (Has the Musical Note symbol)
4. Double click the audio CD icon on your Desktop.
5. Drag the Audio files that you want to include from that CD to the Toast window.
6. Eject that audio CD.
7. Insert another CD, repeat steps 4 and 5, and then repeat steps 6 and 7 as often as necessary. The time each track plays is listed in the Toast window.
8. Set Pause time between Tracks in the Toast window.
9. Insert blank CD, and check to assure it is recognized.
10. Click record and select a speed. (I recommend a slow speed).
11. Toast will ask you to insert the first disc for the first track it attempts to burn, and will continue to ask for you to insert the disc's you got the tracks from.

Creating a duplicate audio CD

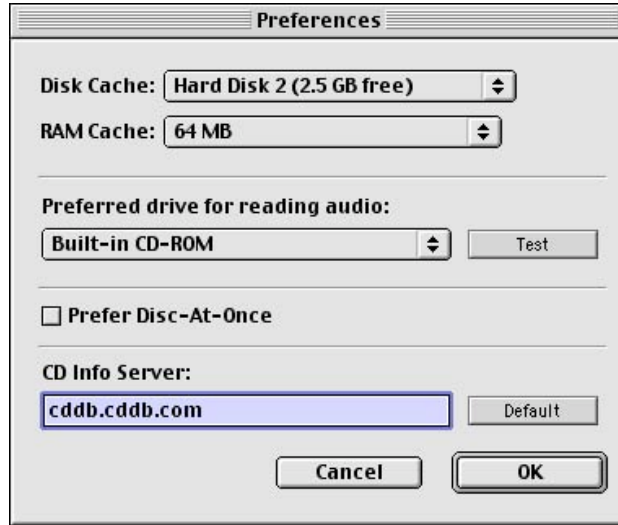
Most of you probably already know how to do this, but it's good review. I am not advocating the copying of audio CDs that are not your own. But, despite what the RIAA believes, there are genuine reasons to want a duplicate of a store-bought CD. For example, my father has organized all our CDs in a cabinet, but there are a few that my sister and I often listen to in the car or in our rooms. Therefore, we sometimes make a copy of those CDs owned and paid for by our family to use in our car or our rooms.

This allows us have our own copy of the favorite CD, and allows Dad keep the purchased copy in the central CD storage cabinet, protecting the original. This is also helpful if you are worried that the CD might get damaged in a car CD player or by exposure to winter or summer temperatures. Make a copy for your own use, and play the copy, keeping the original safe!

To make a duplicate audio CD:

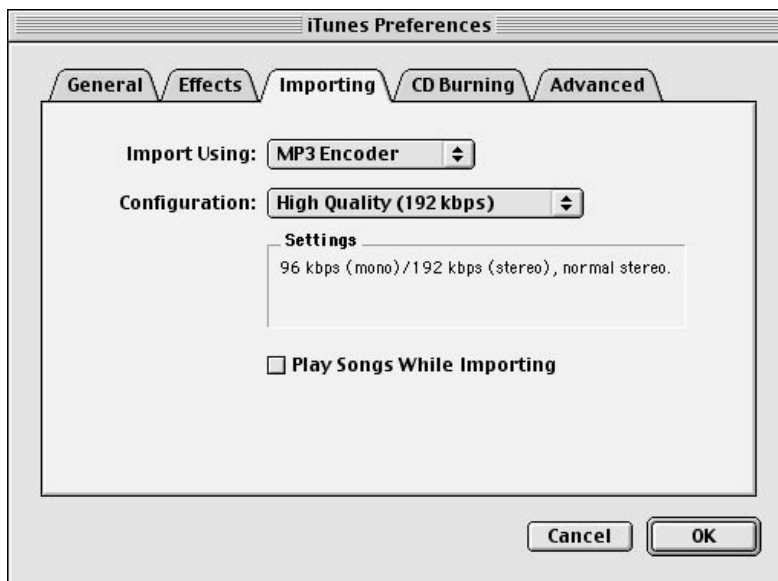
- 1a. Insert the source CD (the CD you are duplicating) into drive one, and the insert a blank CD, into your second drive. Then open Toast.
- 1b. If you have only one drive that both reads and burns CDs then insert the source CD into your Mac's optical drive. Then open Toast and drag the icon for that CD into the Toast Window. When you press record Toast will ask you to insert a "burnable" CD. In either case toast will let you know if the inserted destination disk isn't "burnable."

2. Click the "Copy" Button. Its icon shows two CDs overlapping each other.
3. Click record, and set the burn speed. If burning at full speed does not work, which happens sometimes with audio CD's, then choose a slower record speed. Work your way down from fastest to slowest, using Toast in "simulation" mode.
4. Now that the CD is burned, you're ready to go!



Note: When burning CDs I have the RAM Cache and Disc Cache in the Preferences set as follows: the RAM cache as high as it can go, and the Disk Cache located on my largest hard disk.

The above steps do not rip, convert, or copy the tracks to your hard drive, but merely place them in the burner's cache. The audio tracks burned are not mp3s, but AIFF files, the format used on normal audio CDs. Use iTunes to create mp3 files if you prefer to get more bang (music) on your CDs and have an mp3-capable CD player. *(A note from doc_Harry: Since I want to rearrange and title each track, I've not tried this in Toast 6.)*



Converting songs to AIFF, mp3, and WAV using iTunes

Harry is right that iTunes can convert audio files. iTunes can "rip" directly from a CD (whose files are already in AIFF format) converting them to an mp3, WAV, or from mp3 back to AIFF. When burning to an audio CD from mp3 tracks, iTunes can automatically convert those mp3s to AIFF files. To do so, the iTunes Preferences found in the CD Burning Tab, "Audio CD" selected. If "mp3 CD" is selected, then no conversions will happen the recoding with contain only mp3 tracks. Playing the latter require one of the newer CD player that mp3 track play capability.

To convert an audio file, say, from a CD or your hard disk, to another format in iTunes, I use the following procedure. Note: iTunes will convert audio files in both Mac OS 9.2.x and Mac OS X 10.x.

1. Insert CD and Open iTunes
2. Select the CD from the iTunes Source list, unchecking the songs you do not want converted.
3. Go to the EDIT menu>Preferences (In OS 9.2.x. It may be in the application menu in OS X)
4. In Preferences go to "Importing Tab"
5. Change the pop up menu "Import Using" to AIFF, mp3, or WAV Encoder, and change the pop up menu "Configuration" to whatever setting is listed that you want.
6. Click OK.
7. Now, in the upper right hand corner of your iTunes window, there will be an import button. Your checked songs will be imported and converted to the format settings you selected.

Other settings to be aware of are:

Your imported files will be saved in whatever location you have set up in the Advanced tab in the preferences, by default it is Hard Disk >Documents >iTunes >iTunes Music >CD Name >and so on.

In the "Importing Tab" preferences, there is a box you can check to "Play songs while importing". This is nice to know about user preference.

The "Configuration" pop-up menu will let you specify settings such as sample rate, and stereo or mono channel, depending on the format chosen. I'm not an audio expert, but I can tell you that you want mp3s to be made at 128 kbps or higher when burning. 128 kbps is standard audio CD quality, so if you burn mp3s at a lower speed, they sound as if they are being played under water. I convert mp3s to 192 kbps to get the best possible music sound. After all, both CDs and hard disk space are cheap. I can't tell the difference between 128 kbps files and higher kbps files most of the time, but there are occasions when I can, so the higher the kbps, the higher the quality sound. You can set an even higher kbps, but remember, most of the time you won't hear much difference, and the higher the kbps, the larger the file size.

Making a Multisession Disc in Toast 6

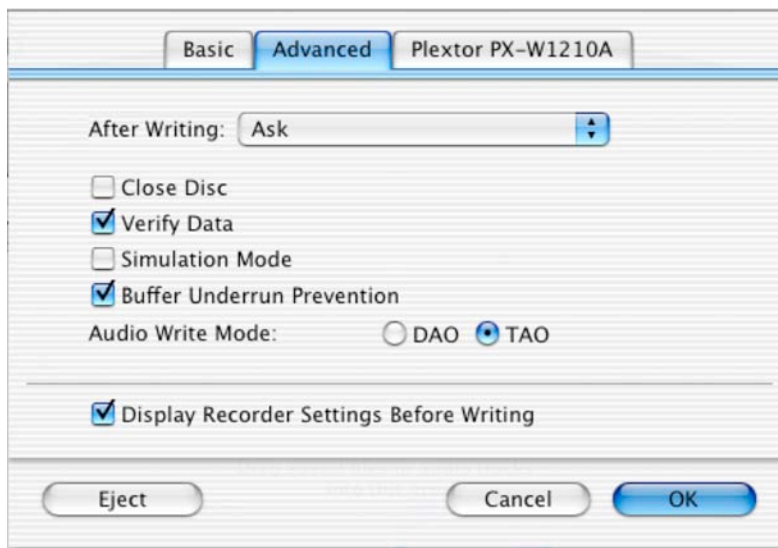
Sessions, in Toast, are a Macintosh only thing!

Harry {doc} Babad

Sometimes you want to create a runtime record of critical data items such as databases,

household finance records, and the like. Or you might want to check out something in a version earlier than the item that is the currently on your hard drive. The answer is to make a session disk for that information.

According to Roxio Help, a session is a recorded area on a disc that contains one or more music or data tracks. A disc can have either a single session or multiple sessions, and a disc with multiple sessions is called a multisession disc. *Roxio also recommends not making multisession audio CDs, since they are only minimally functional.*



The key to successfully making a multisession disk lies in not closing the CD at the end of a burn. Assure the "Close Disc" check box is *not* checked. [Note: In Toast 5.x Titanium, when pressing the record button, you automatically get a window asking whether you wanted to burn a full or a session CD.]

DETAILS: To do this, when you are ready to record the data items you've added to the Toast 6 main window, at the prompt, insert a new disc or simply one containing earlier sessions. Then from the Toast menu choose Recorder >Recorder Settings >click the Advanced tab and deselect "Close Disc." (Alternately, click the green "Recorder Options" button, and choose and then change Recorder Settings.) Click OK and then the red "record button." Since many of us rarely make session CDs, confirm after creating one or more sessions, you *recheck* the "Close Disc" check box. Otherwise, your future audio or data disks will not be universally playable on other than Macintosh computers, since PC users "don't have session burn privileges. It's a WINTEL thing.

In closing, Derek and I wish you success in all your burns!

Feature



Macromedia Studio MX 2004

Reviewed by James Meister

Macromedia

600 Townsend Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
1-415-553-2700
1-800-470-7211

<http://www.macromedia.com/>

\$800 USD with Flash MX 2004;
\$900 USD with Flash MX Professional;
Upgrade from Studio MX \$400 USD

System Requirements

Windows

- 600 MHz Intel Pentium III processor or equivalent
- Windows 98 SE, Windows 2000, or Windows XP
- 256 MB RAM (512 MB recommended)
- 800 MB available disk space

Macintosh

- 500 MHz PowerPC G3 processor
- Mac OS 10.2.6
- 256 MB RAM (512 MB recommended)
- 500 MB available disk space

Experience Needed: Somewhat Experienced

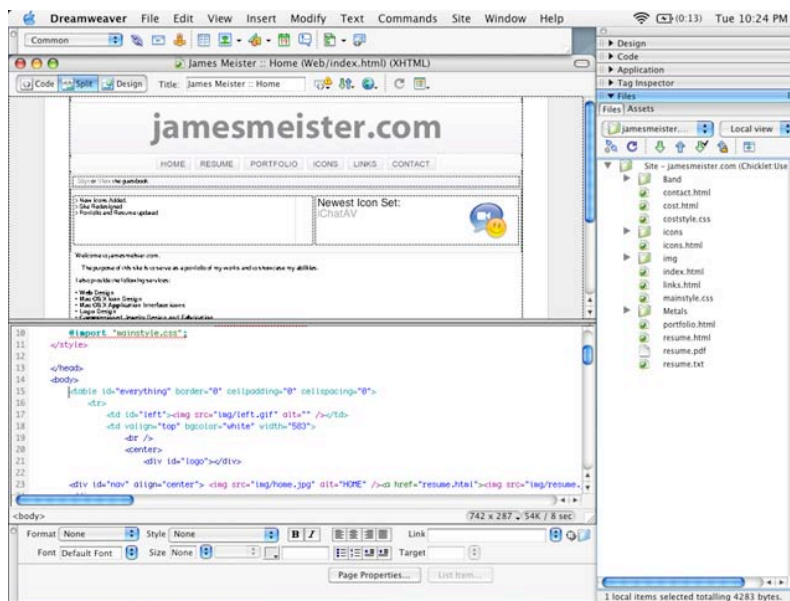


Strengths: Many new improvements, enhanced workflow. Enhanced Web Standards integration, improved user interface.

Weaknesses: Sluggish performance on G3's and lower MHz G4's.

Macromedia, after making the leap into the aqua world of Mac OS X in 2002, has been hard at work developing a major upgrade to their newly dubbed MX suite of applications. Only one year after Studio MX hit the shelves, Macromedia has released Studio MX 2004. Included in this upgrade is Dreamweaver, Flash, Freehand, and Fireworks, (The version of Freehand MX included was released earlier this year) as well as Cold Fusion MX Developer Edition. This new upgrade introduces many new enhancements from the original MX series including, an updated user interface, new creative features, and some major usability improvements.

MX 2004 has improved upon many newly accepted web standards as well as many inter-app relation issues, making development faster and more compatible across multiple platforms. One of the biggest additions to Studio MX is CSS integration into Dreamweaver. CSS is a markup protocol that allows web developers and designers tell the browser how to display HTML elements. CSS allows the designer to separate design elements from the HTML markup tags and allows for easier modification of design across larger websites. CSS is a browser independent way of designing websites and allows for Dreamweaver to create cleaner web site code. Dreamweaver allows for greater design control through CSS by enhancing it's CSS Panel and the new CSS-based Inspector that allows the designer to select different design layouts and styles without switching modes. CSS has been added to the code hint panel when in code view, allowing for faster coding and almost error free CSS code.



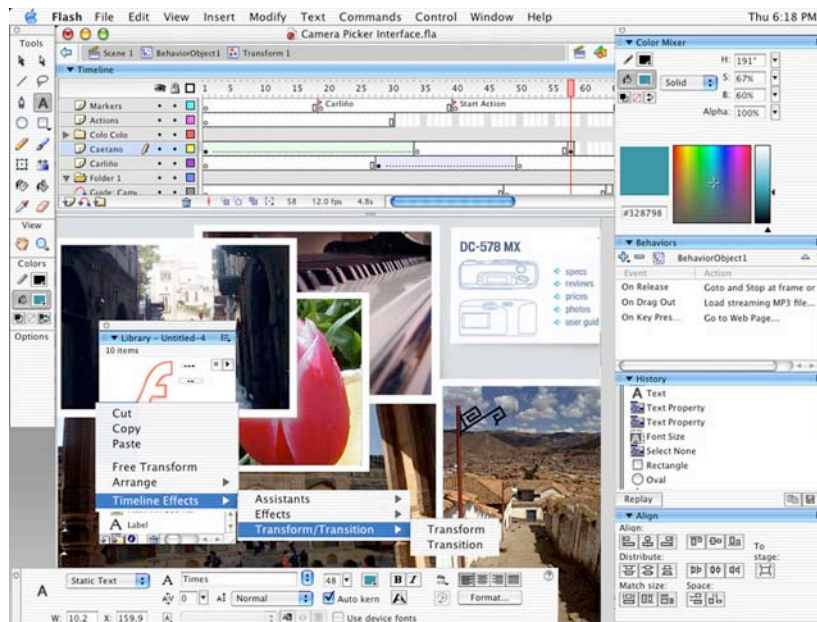
Aside from the major addition of CSS support, Dreamweaver also benefits from many smaller interface and feature additions, such as full Unicode support, Secure FTP, New PHP Server behaviors, Updated O'Reilly® content on SQL, ASP.NET, and PHP. Macromedia enhanced the insert bar in Dreamweaver while at the same time, reduced the size of the palette allowing for more screen space to get your work accomplished. The interface has been overhauled to increase the available workspace, and show context and focus more clearly, as well as a new Start Screen that appears when no document is open, giving you quick access to recently used files, help and tutorial resources.



One big difference Flash developers will face when moving up to MX 2004 is Basic or Pro. Flash Basic is just like all of the previous versions of Flash with new features and additional improvements while the new Professional version is aimed more towards Application Developers, Video Professionals and Workgroups, with features such as a new Forms based authoring environment for powerful web based applications, Development for PDA's and Cell Phones via a new built in device emulators, and Quicktime - FLV plugins for converting video from Avid Xpress, Final Cut Pro and other similar programs.

Much like Dreamweaver, Flash has a large library of behaviors, and scripts that allow for faster production via drag 'n drop. Although there are quite a lot of pre-made scripts, there is an even larger library available online in the Macromedia Exchange website. A new thing in the world of Flash, Macromedia has added CSS support, allowing for style sheets that define variables inside Flash files. Very cool.

Probably the coolest feature of Flash MX 2004 only comes with the Professional version, and that is Device player Emulation. Users can now preview content using the Flash player emulators that provide identical interfaces to many mobile devices, such as cell phones and PDA's that use Flash Player mobile. Over time, more and more device emulators will become available as carriers and OEM's license Flash Player.

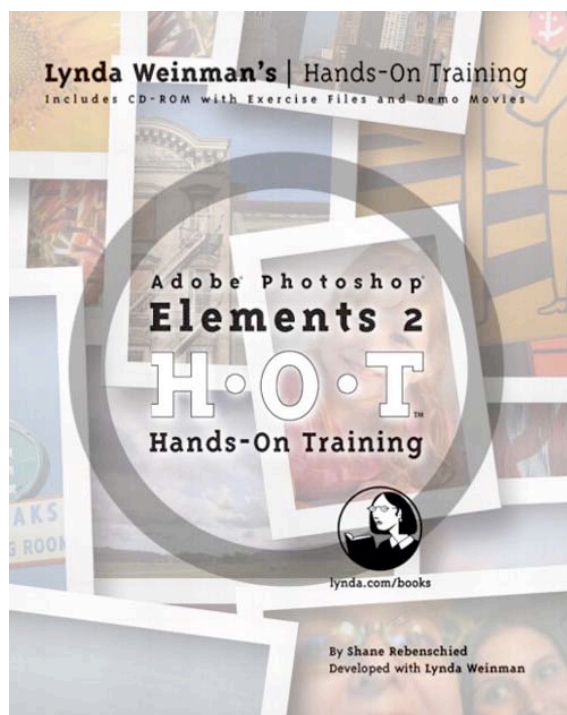


Among its brothers, Fireworks MX 2004 has also received the customary interface overhaul, and performance enhancements, the Web Graphics application receives a slew of new drawing tools. Among these new tools are; Auto Shapes offer image manipulation options beyond drag, rotate and resize; Replace color, Red Eye Removal, and Contour Gradients allow you to create multicolor gradients that follow a shape's outline path. Probably one of my favorite features had to be the cross-platform image preview. This allows you to view images on one computer (Mac or PC) as if you had both a Mac and a PC at your disposal. (View > Windows Gamma // View > Mac Gamma) A real time and money saver for a developer on a budget who is curious about how his work will appear on a different platform.

Conclusion

Overall I would highly recommend this suite of applications. It's a MUST for any web developer wanting the latest edge on trends and standards. One small issue for users with G3's or lower MHz G4's is that many of the apps, (yes even Fireworks with it's estimated 85% speed increase) felt very sluggish. On my iBook Dual USB at 500MHz, Dreamweaver takes about 8 seconds to open a single HTML file. Pretty disappointing for a simple operation. The user interface improvements and CSS integration are worth the upgrade themselves.

Books



Adobe Photoshop Elements 2 H•O•T Hands-On Training

Reviewed by Julie M. Willingham

Written by Shane Rebenschied; developed with
Lynda Weinman

lynda.com books

Peachpit Press; 08 September 2003

800 E. 96th St.

Indianapolis IN 46240

1-800-571-5840, 317-428-3000; fax: 317-428-3280

<http://www.lynda.com/books>

<http://www.peachpit.com/>

341 pages + CD-ROM

\$29.99 USD, \$45.99 CD, £ 23.50 UK

Errata: <http://www.lynda.com/books/elm2hot/>

ISBN 0321203003

User level: beginning to intermediate users of
OS 9.1 or newer, or Windows

98/Me/NT/2000/XP



Strengths: Easy to follow, even in the more technical parts. Lots of screenshots. Good introduction to software interface. CD includes 30-day trials of Adobe Photoshop Elements™ 2.0, Adobe Reader™, and QuickTime™ 6.3.

Weaknesses: Almost all the screenshots are of Windows OS. Appendix is minimal

I had too little time to review **Adobe Photoshop Elements 2 H•O•T Hands-On Training** as well as I should have, but Shane Rebenschied certainly kept my attention. This book showed me how do more types of manipulation of photographs than I ever intend to do, but the exercises were still interesting and to the point.

The book starts with an introduction to **Photoshop Elements** 2 (PSE 2) and how it differs from the previous version, then jumps right into the main items of the PSE interface so that you'll have at least a vague idea of what the toolbox, palettes, and options bar do. Then you get to practice opening creating, and importing images (as if) from a scanner or digital camera. Rebenschied includes a list of PSE-supported image formats, and another list of PSE-acceptable video formats. He discusses the use of the RGB, grayscale, and bitmap image modes. There are 8 exercises in this part of the book.

Then you learn about the basics of layers and layer blending modes, tools for selecting parts of your image, painting and drawing tools, erasing, and browser-safe colors. This is followed by discussion of layer styles, how to create shapes, and how to add and edit text. A total of 15 exercises are in this section, which is where I learned the most. I had been able to "dink around" in PSE on my own by reading the Help and other files, but after reading specific chapters, I understand more about what is going on.

The final section of this book contains 17 exercises, including how to attach PSE files to e-mail, make a PDF slideshow, and how to compress files for Internet use. Many people will find this part most interesting, because this is where the author shows how to correct photos with dodge and burn, color, exposure compensation, and bring out detail. Retouching them is a separate chapter and includes fixing red eye and wrinkles, coloring black and white photos, and getting rid of dust specks and scratches. And there is also a chapter on merging and compositing photos, so, for example, you can learn to create a picture of an ant carrying the Sears tower. I learned a lot from this section, even though I probably would never mess with my photographs that much.

I thought **Adobe Photoshop Elements 2 H•O•T** was well organized and easy to follow, even through the most technical parts. I haven't used PSE much (no time), so I think the book reaches its target audience of beginner-intermediate users. The appendix is minimal, with 5 online resources and 3 support sites (1 for the book, 1 for the publisher, and 1 for Adobe.) The illustrations are mostly, if not all, screenshots in color, and I could see them just fine. Something keeps nagging me that this book wasn't perfect, but I don't have any solid data to back up that feeling. If you need to learn PSE quickly, or need to learn something specific now, this is the book for you.

Firewalls and Internet Security Second Edition

Repelling the Wily Hacker

William R. Cheswick
Steven M. Bellovin
Aviel D. Rubin



ADDISON-WESLEY PROFESSIONAL COMPUTING SERIES

Firewalls and Internet Security: Repelling the Wily Hacker, Second Edition

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: William R. Cheswick, Steven M. Bellovin, Aviel D. Rubin

<http://cheswick.com>, <http://stevebellovin.com>, <http://avirubin.com>
<http://www.wilyhacker.com>

Addison-Wesley Pub Co; 2nd edition, February 24, 2003

<http://www.awprofessional.com>

\$50 USD, \$78 CAN, £ 38 Net UK

464 pages

ISBN: 020163466X

Errata: <http://www.wilyhacker.com/errata/index.html>

TechTV Video:

<http://www.techtv.com/screensavers/showtell/story/0,24330,34256,26,00.html>

Intermediate to Advanced Technical



Strengths: Current References, links, principles and practices of what works - and what doesn't.

Weaknesses: Pretty much Unix-only. And dwells on some anecdotal decade-old experiences (probably because they are safe to discuss).

Firewalls and Internet Security: Repelling the Wily Hacker, Second Edition by William R. Cheswick, Steven M. Bellovin, Aviel D. Rubin is not really a "How-To" book, however, it speaks to the needs of a system administrator that manages mostly Unix-based networks – and that is why I reviewed the book. It applies to systems such as what an Xserve□ would populate. (And there are a few "How-Tos" found in it too.)

Are you interested in the psychology of security of each layer of communications and network setups? You'll find it here.

Needs analysis, strategies and techniques, security formulas and a couple of examples are all tied neatly up in a Doctoral Thesis approach (including the reporting method of Reference name and year published as the "see more here" process) to instruction. We are led to find what is out there ready to attack us, and what to look for in order to keep the "nasties" away. The authors decided to give hackers a bad name instead of crackers. But don't let that dissuade you from reading further. The authors discuss methodologies and mindsets used to sneak in and wreak havoc, but at a "higher level" so as not to bog us down too much on minutia.

The authors stick to the KISS principle, yet discuss attack methods and classes. They provide a holistic approach to rules, tool sets, current protocols and their weaknesses in pretty much layman's terms. I love the thought processes they used to show both the strengths and weaknesses of each technology used in computer communications and how those can possibly be balanced.

I'm not going to do a blow-by-blow chapter review of this book. You can find that elsewhere. The links provided above also do a great job pointing those out. I will say that this book is a classic because of its resources, presentation and its readability. And the price is within most everyone's reach.

Just be aware that there are 7 sections splitting information amongst 19 chapters and an Appendix. The Appendix discusses Cryptography and also provides a lot of resources to to peruse at your leisure. Also the link above to *TechTV* also provides much of the same information. The Bibliography is about 34 pages long. The book also has a list of bombs and a list of acronyms, both of which are mercifully short.

If you have the least bit of a notion of wanting to learn about networking in general and security in particular, then get this book. Just don't expect it to dwell on anything else but a FreeBSD environment these guys are used to. Much of what is discussed is cross-transferable however.

I found I had to read this book over a great period of time, because there was so much to digest and so much to relearn. This is not a book that can be read in a noisy environment. It requires concentration and undivided attention to be enjoyed. It is not really a "quick read".

The 2nd edition is pretty much a rewrite of the 1st edition. The first discussed how to think about threats and provided solutions. The 2nd defines security problems, highlights weaknesses and provides insight into effectiveness or ineffectiveness of certain kinds of protection.

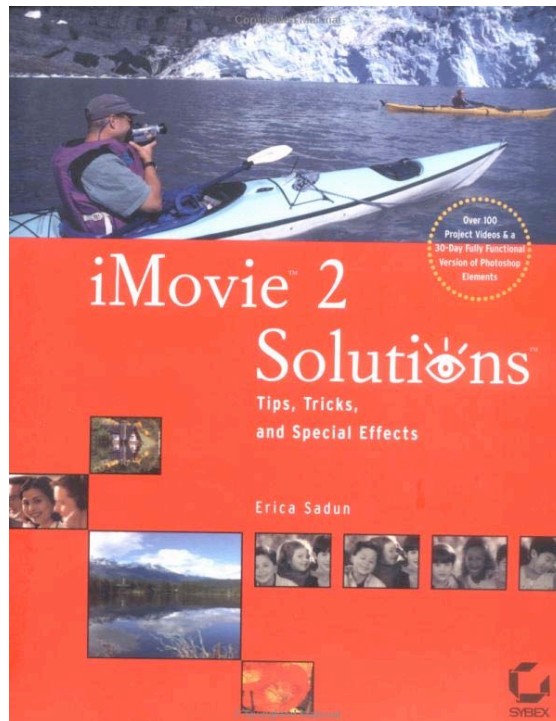
The best part? I think that would be the book's website, but don't let that stop you from buying the book. The book is full of truisms and the occasional bit of humor that keeps this topic from getting stale. It builds on well over a decade of experience, so go get it. It isn't supposed to be "everything", but it knows where to get what itself doesn't cover.

So what does the book really provide? What works best in filtering, what firewalls can and cannot do, which practices and services are overkill (the authors aren't too excited about the software packages that monitor and report infiltrations). Methodologies are also explored regarding cracking into systems and honeypotting (fake site flytraps for unwary crackers).

All that is really missing from this book is a definition of terms. And pay attention to the errata link posted above too.

With OS X, this book is a "backgrounder" on security. Mac OS X is sparsely mentioned. That is not necessarily a bad thing. They do mention however that Rendezvous is a vulnerability and they want access to it turned off if it isn't being used. I think that bothers me a little. Read the book and you will know probably more than most folks do who provide network security for a living. And you will know where to get even more information, if you so desire. Oh, and if you care to know, I marked this book up quite a bit as I went through it more than once. When you get it, you will too.

Your Ad could be here!



iMovie 2 Solutions : Tips. Tricks and Special Effects

Reviewed by Dr.Eric Flescher

Author: Erica Sadun
Sybex, Inc. May 2002
1151 Marina Village Parkway
Alameda, CA 94501
1-510-523-8233
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<http://www.sybex.com>

272 pages
\$40 USD , \$ 64 CD £ 30 UK (includes CD)
ISBN: 0782140882, EAN: 9 780782 140880,
UPC: 0252-11-440889
[Editor: Get the iMovie 3 Solutions book:
ISBN: 0782142478, EAN: 9 780782 142471,
UPC: 0252-11-442470, same price, 288 pages,
June 2003]



Strengths: Very well laid out step-by-step in-depth instructions and illustrated screens and visuals are well done. Great resources on CD introduce you to new tools that you can use for the exercises in the book as well as other creations in other works you may produce with basic graphics, animations and more.

Weaknesses: This book is not for the novice graphic and video creator. The creations are a "work in progress" and you learn best by "doing." One must learn how to use Quicktime Pro and Photoshop Elements and the basic tools first. Most of the basics are not covered in the book as you are assumed to know these tools. One must pay the shareware fees for continued support of some of the

software. Full software access once the initial trials are over or in the case of Quicktime Pro, must be paid in advance to access the software add technically to the initial price of the book. However these costs are reasonable (in comparison to buying other software like Photoshop[®], Final Cut Pro[®], Adobe Premier[®]). You will find much of the software most helpful for other projects and applications beyond the book as well.

Check out **iMovie 2 Solutions: Tips ,Tricks and Special Effects** by Erica Sadun. [Actually get the next book *iMovie Solutions 3* for the same price.] For Macintosh users, iMovie has become a very popular tool, particularly for novice and "non-expert editors," who want to make and create videos for home, work and school. Many video creators however think that iMovie is only a tool for novice users and that if you want to produce quality videos, one needs to use other software. There is an assumption that you need to move to Final Cut Pro or Adobe Premiere to build stylish and more professional looking videos. If you want to improve your editing productions, do you have to use other software? However brilliant visual and dynamic videos can be produced with iMovie. All you need are some extra resources and step-by-step instructions. The book **iMovie 2 Solutions** can, provide the guidance, tips, tricks, knowledge and resources to develop the special effects to take your videos to the next level.

As for the software itself, (the book does not cover this issue), iMovie can be used with either OSX or OS9. Imovie2 is not contained on the CD so you must download it from the Apple site, if you don't have it. (Users with the first edition iMovie may want to upgrade for free from the Apple site while new Macintosh owners will find it on their new computers). The book comes with a well stocked CD that contains software to be used with the chapter, instructions and projects. Demo trial versions (PhotoShop Elements, Totally Hip Livestage Professional and Hipflicks) can be used (but once the allotted time is used up you must use other software or purchase the product). Additional resources as Ulead Royalty Free Media (video, images and sound), shareware utilities (Filetyper, DVmaker, MakeSimpletext, SoundRecorder, SoundEffects), GeeThree slick transitions and effects sample packs and additional resources help to integrate special effects into your videos.

Chapter one introduces you to power tips and getting the most out of iMovie. Quicktime Pro is introduced as a tool for video production. One soon discovers that the name of the book is a little bit of misnomer. Much of the work is accomplished by using tools available within Quicktime Pro (which you must purchase from Apple for a nominal fee) and then imported and used in iMovie.

Once this realization subsides, you can dive into the 100 projects, which each chapter encourages you to build as a practice sessions towards building more stylish videos.

This first chapter covers the so-called "secret files," the project folder and the many folders within the subfolder called media. These contain the sounds, stills, videos and special clips one

uses to produce the video. These chapter basics, give you a good understanding of the inner workings of the iMovie software. The liberal use of screen shots, gives you a very good visual insight into the various parts of the software and what the text is elaborating upon. Editing and changing preferences, extracting and transforming transitions, iMovie's file types, importing, extracting and using sounds, tracks in your video that hold sound or videos, annotating movies (adding credits, copyright and other labels) are also covered. Additional details cover how to export and import (digital video (DV) movies, moving between iMovie and Quicktime, preparing nonstandard sized video the transfer of stills. Performing cutaways (jumping from one video source to another like those used on television) transforming footage with empty titles, cutting footage, positioning tricks, and resizing and precise placement of audio are also covered in depth.

Chapter two elaborates upon iMovie stills and special effects with images that can be presented with iMovie. The instruction detail how images can be imported as is and how fade effects can be added to the movies. Using Photoshop Elements for exporting and modifying stills (adding thought bubbles) are possible. Adding color blends and replacing colors, using transitions to highlight objects on the video are demonstrated and discussed. Background animations can be created to add colorful and changing displays and backgrounds.

In Chapter three, overlays are covered along with concept and techniques of the integration of video footage and still photos, by placing above the existing video, in different layers. Stacking your videos to create repeated images and adding overlays to hide flaws in your video or photos or to emphasize special parts of the images are demonstrated. This includes the use of picture grids that are a creative way of composing multiple clips within a single movie. The more complex designer grids, using Photoshop elements take the grid concept to another higher level. Learning how to create video albums and image galleries to share, adding frame like features around the videos are also noted. Combining fancy overlay techniques and iMovie's Push transition allows the creating of virtual art galleries.

Transparencies, in Chapter four show how blending, adding and creating merged videos from different sources, as well as adding logos and watermarks can be achieved. Learn to use masks and crop your photos to hide or highlight all or parts of your video sequences. Focusing attention and using transparencies for particular effects are introduced, along with the use of insets and side by side videos that can be used to join and integrate segments and videos. Creating "hole like features," to let one video source show through another video are talked about in detail.

Chapter five, animated effects, are covered along with animation creation and adding moving banners. This chapter introduces the Apple's free software called MakeEffectsMovie (downloading directions provided) which was developed to showcase the range of effects for QuickTime developers but for the most part, are used to build exciting and animated movies. Flying overalls are covered and how to add see through elements that move around the various parts of the screen are reported. Effects as stock ticker, animated borders, border variations, making objects flying across the screen, sending a message, rotating overlays, bull's eye effects, basic mask animations, over masking, moving lens effects, flying stripes, exploding effects, animated footprints show other possibilities to stylize your video in different ways not thought possible.

Chapter six, the use of titles are covered and more. While titles can be created with iMovie, instructions in this chapter go beyond the basics. Large sized titles (using Photoshop Elements) can be created along with titled sequences and using zoom effects. Adding effects to your title and importing titles designed with other programs, along with adding subtitles and special touches and use of masks over titles are also amply covered. Some of these effects are paused drift, tumbling scrolls, dragging sound tracks from your favorite CD, ghost titling tricks, rippling titles, colored lens effects, more exploding titles, hidden messages, title on title effects, fluid-drip transitions, center zooms, twist and turn titles, lingering text, Quicktime produced titles and fade aways.

Chapter seven, iMovie artistry covers self-expression in new and different ways. Learning how to control the color in your videos and produce additional effects, using PowerPoint and producing slide shows within iMovie and using Quicktime are highlighted. Special effects (black-and white to color, old time feeling nostalgia enhanced effects, using rich color tints, color grids, TV masks, TV type documentary panning effects, creating and using river or pond reflections, using gradient wipe effects, special use of fades and cut effects.

This book offers a wealth of information, ideas and resources for video editing endeavors. The author uses visual screen shots well and these are most helpful in demonstrating the instructions and the effects. Most of the instructions are highlighted within the screen shots and illustrations. However in isolated cases, the essential parts in the visuals are not highlighted. You have a little bit of searching to find out what the text " is talking about."

This is not a book for beginners. Each chapter has a set of step by step exercises that require a little thought and application. Novice users who have not used iMovie beforehand, may quickly get lost. Users who have made movies with iMovie and gained insight into the tools and uses of the software will gain a better appreciate of the exercises and what additional effects can be created with iMovie. While you may not want to utilize all the effects outlined in all the chapters, you will gain a better appreciation of the use of Quicktime, iMovie and other software tools.

One must learn how to use the other software contained on the CD as well as QuickTime Pro to utilize the book to the fullest. . When tools such, for example magic wand are used in the instructions, the author does not detail where the tool is found within the PhotoShop Elements software. When certain tools for the software are talked about, if you are not familiar with these, a little searching is involved. The author does not go into basic details about PhotoShop Elements and some of the other software, so you must learn how to use these application-tools before you progress further with the exercises.

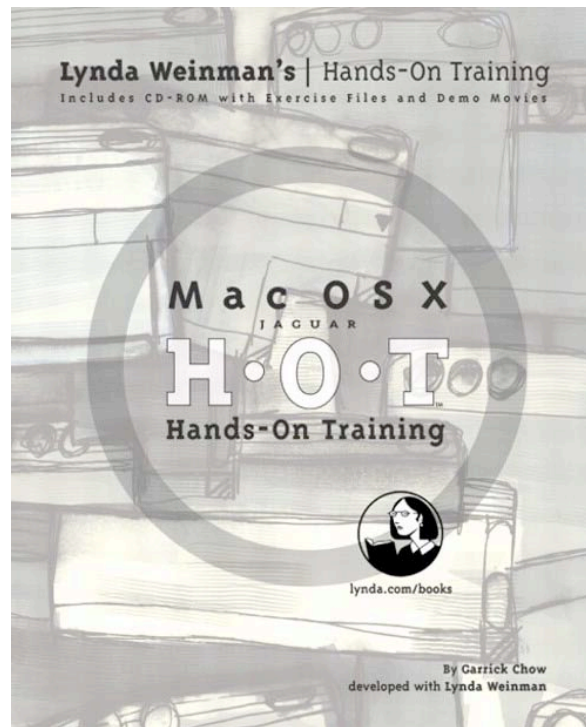
Other shareware and other software are talked about within the context of the exercises and these are illustrated in helpful fashion and instructions elaborate on the use. When the trial periods are over you must pay to keep using the software and these are reasonable priced. While this adds to the basic cost of the purchase of the book technically, you may find these tools very helpful in all sorts of graphic and artistic uses, especially now that you have been introduced to the power of some of these graphic tools.

As your creations grow, you can begin to integrate the resources of the different chapter to meet you needs. With the ideas and knowledge from this book, designing creative iMovies, Quicktime videos and using the software for different graphic projects of your own design are within your reach. Practicing with the well thought out step by step instructions takes time but it is a challenge and fun. Along the way you will learn further about how to use your iMovie

software to the fullest.

If you are interested advancing your video experiences. Working with iMovie and Quicktime and graphic software to produce more stylish videos, then this book iMovie2 Solutions, may give you the blend of instructions and resources, to take your iMovies to even greater heights.

Your Ad could be here!



Mac OS X Jaguar H•O•T Hands-On Training

Reviewed by Julie M. Willingham

Written by Garrick Chow; developed with
Lynda Weinman
lynda.com books
Peachpit Press; 23 April 2003
1249 Eighth St, Berkeley CA 94710
1- 800-283-9444, 510-524-2478; fax: 510-635-
2221

<http://www.lynda.com/books>

<http://www.peachpit.com/>

838 pages + CD-ROM

\$50 USD, \$70 CD, £ 34 UK

Errata:

<http://www.lynda.com/books/osxhot/errata.html>

ISBN 0321180992

User level: beginning to intermediate users of
OS X 10.2



Strengths: "Basics" are very basic, but I still learned new stuff. I learned more about using Mail. "The Digital Hub" section showed me a lot about iTunes, iPhoto, iMovie, and iDVD. There are lots of screenshots. The exercise files and demo movies on the CD work and are helpful.

Weaknesses: For an intermediate user, there are few tricks to learn in "Basics". Web browser use focuses on Safari and Microsoft Internet Explorer™, and merely acknowledges the existence of other browsers. Not everyone will want to use all the applications discussed.

Robert (our publisher) gave me **Mac OS X Jaguar H•O•T Hands-On Training** by Garrick Chow so I could learn to edit articles, e-mail, and otherwise function at a minimal level in Mac OS X 10.2. Though I hadn't used Mac OS X since it "took over my computer" when I installed it, I had seen Jaguar used in demos at my local MUG meetings, so I was vaguely familiar with how it looked and worked. I finally got around to looking at this book, and was pleased to learn more than I thought I would.

There are 4 sections to this book. "Basics" is indeed basic, starting with windows, scroll bars, files and folders, etc. But in those seven chapters (one-third of the book) I learned I could add folders and files to the Dock, how to work with and edit font palettes, and that I might still have to manually delete preference files for applications that I uninstalled by dragging them to the Trash. There are 32 exercises in this section, ranging from extremely basic to useful. There were 2 corrupt fonts in the Chapter 6 file exercises, but I replaced them from the lynda.com errata site.

"Working Online" covers getting onto the Internet (dial-up, broadband, Ethernet, wireless); browsers and how to use them; and Address Book, Mail, iChat, Sherlock, and .Mac. There are 21 exercises in this section, most of them fairly basic for an intermediate user. I skimmed the parts about iChat and .Mac, because I intend not to use them. The sections most useful to me were Mail and Sherlock. I learned to attach files to e-mail by dragging them to my message, to use Command + to enlarge the size of screen text, how to train Mail to filter junk mail, and that Sherlock has language translation capability.

I learned the most from "The Digital Hub", five chapters comprising about one-quarter of the book. I skimmed the chapter on iCal and iSync, because I have nothing to sync with/to, and prefer paper calendars that I can touch. In "iTunes 3", I learned how to add track info to CDs that aren't on the CDDB [CD Database Music Recognition Service] (and that the CDDB existed!), and how to use Sound Check (under Preferences) to adjust all the music to play at the same volume. In "iPhoto 2", I learned how to import and organize pictures, how to fix minor problems with them, and how to make a slide show with or without an audio track. In "iMovie 3", I found out I would need a DV camera to make use of this software. With the exercises, I learned how to add sound effects, music, and live audio; and how to export my movie to a DV camera, QuickTime, and DVD. "iDVD 3" showed me how to work with the included themes, add pictures and music, make a slideshow, and how to preview and burn my DVD. The 28 exercises in this section were extremely useful for me, because I didn't have to read the ReadMe files for each piece of software merely to get started.

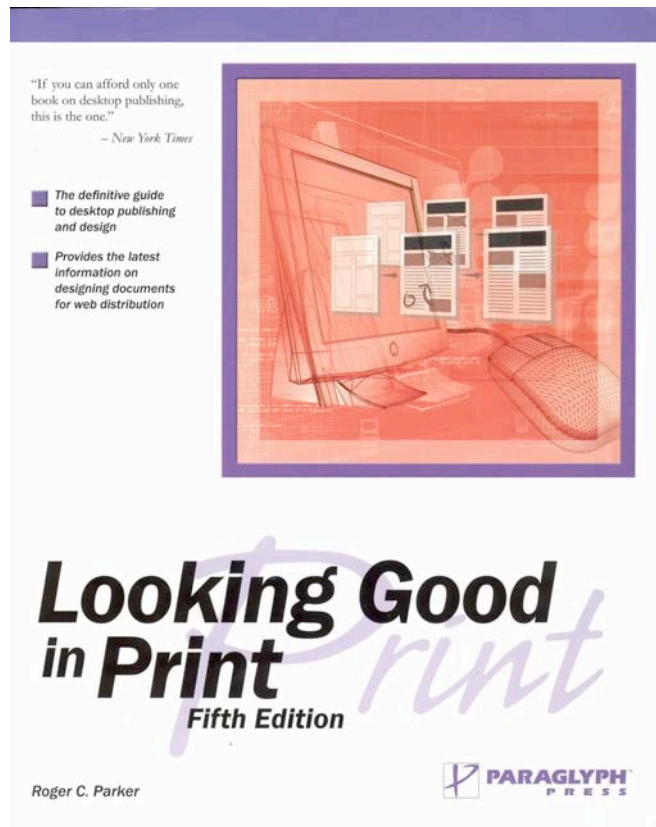
"Networking" contains 4 exercises, but was of little use to me, because I don't have another computer to link to. It discusses how to buy a router, then connecting from Mac OS X to Mac OS X, Windows to Mac OS X, and Mac OS X to Windows.

There are three appendices; a "glossary" of default applications and utilities in Jaguar; Internet resources for Apple news, rumors, troubleshooting forums, user forums, software, Mac tips and tutorials, and third party add-ons; and a brief, basic troubleshooting guide.

Mac OS X Jaguar H•O•T Hands-On Training is well organized, easy to read, and covers sophisticated concepts in a basic manner. Some parts may seem too simple for intermediate users, but other parts may temporarily baffle beginners. It has a good table of contents and index, and the online resources part of the appendix is useful. There are screenshots on almost every page, and they are large enough for me to see with my glasses on. (I'm life-long nearsighted and

in the stage of resisting bifocals.) The lynda.com website seems to be useful, though there isn't much related to the book itself beyond info for a prospective buyer. While I learned a lot from this book, it was mostly in "The Digital Hub" section. I am somewhat of a cheapskate, and would not have paid \$50 USD for this book, because I don't like paying for what I don't/wouldn't use. Nonetheless, I would recommend this excellent book for someone who is just starting out in Mac OS X Jaguar and needs to learn a lot about it.

Your Ad could be here!



Looking Good in Print, Fifth Edition
Reviewed by Julie M. Willingham

Author: Roger C. Parker
www.newentrepreneur.com
www.guerillamarketingdesign.com
www.onepagenewsletters.com
Paraglyph Press, Inc.; 14 July 2003
4015 N. 78th St. #115, Scottsdale AZ 85251
1-602-749-8787
<http://www.paraglyphpress.com/>
320 pages
\$30 USD, \$50 CD
ISBN 1932111824
User level: intermediate to advanced users of
any OS or platform with little design
experience.



Strengths: Lots of examples. Well organized and clear. Index in large type size. Covers Mac and Windows, with screenshots from both platforms. Assumes basic adult intelligence. Makes me want to start publishing something!

Weaknesses: Publisher's website had no further information on this book.

Having read several of Robin Williams' books on design and typography, I thought **Looking Good in Print, Fifth Edition**, by Roger C. Parker, was worth a look, if only to see whether Parker's ideas clashed with Williams' ideas. I am happy to report that they did not.

This book contains a useful foreword, detailed table of contents, useful introduction, a large section on the "Elements of Design", a larger section on "Putting Your Knowledge to Work", an appendix of prepress tips and techniques, and an index in large type.

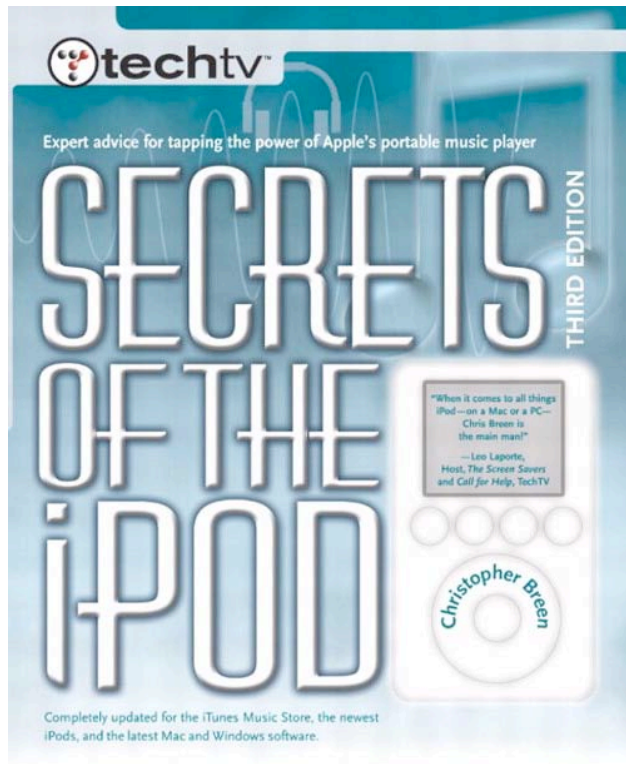
Right in the Introduction, the author tells you that you already have an inherent sense of design and how to recognize and cultivate it. He mentions how you can benefit from this book, and what you need to use it. Then he tells you to get going.

In "Elements of Design," Parker reminds you to think about your message, and to plan with pencil and paper. He discusses basic design concepts, including simplicity and proofreading. He reviews column width, margins, headlines, sidebars, logos, etc., and how to use type, white space, and graphics for the best presentation. I learned new and interesting information about typography, and was reminded about some things I had forgotten. The author discusses both illustrations and photographs, including the ethics of photo manipulation and obtaining permission from subjects. And he includes examples of how to use clip art, background textures, patterns, picture fonts, and informational graphics such as pie charts, maps, and screen captures.

In "Putting Your Knowledge to Work," Parker discusses, analyzes, and provides examples of layouts for newsletters, tabloids, newspapers; ads of many sizes and styles; sales materials such as flyers, catalogs, and menus; surveys and coupons; and business forms like letterhead, cards, and fax cover sheets. He points out that the design of advertisements is extremely important, because most of us avoid them without thinking about it. Chapter 12, "Common Design Pitfalls," and Chapter 13, "Redesign," showed many examples and ideas for improvement, along with explanations. The last chapter, "Designing Documents for Web Distribution," is new in this edition. Parker explains why many people would still rather print a document than read it on the screen, and what you can do about it. He points out the advantages and disadvantages of paper versus screen, makes suggestions for reconciling the differences, and discusses file options for protecting your creative work on the Web. (Now, if I made myself some free time, I could come up with a list of improvements for *macCompanion*; but that's about 2 years away.)

The appendix of "Prepress Tips and Techniques" discusses image databases, paper selection, color printing, printing service bureaus, and how to help your bureau.

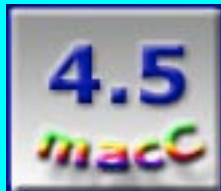
This book was very easy and quick to read, and easy on my eyes. I know little about the art of design, but had no trouble following the author's intent throughout the book. There are clear illustrations, many with captions, on almost every page, which would have been easy to understand even if the text had been unclear. Some people will complain that there is no color in this book, but I think color would have detracted from the design examples. The publisher's website is minimal, but that didn't bother me. After all, a book is a book, not a website, too.



Secrets of the iPod, 3rd Edition

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Christopher Breen
TechTV and Peachpit Press, August 22, 2003
<http://www.techtv.com>
<http://www.peachpit.com>
328 Pages
\$20 USD, \$31 CAN, £15 Net UK
ISBN: 0321223713
<http://www.peachpit.com/ipodsecrets>
Beginner - Intermediate



Strengths: Soup-to-nuts history to troubleshooting ipod hysteria.

Weaknesses: No update website.

Now that Steve Jobs has allowed "hell to freeze over" with the release of iTunes□ for the WinTel environment, **Secrets of the iPod, 3rd Edition** by Christopher Breen has all of a sudden become very, very important. Why? Because he delves deeply into how the iPod□ works in a Windows environment. He has added quite a bit to the previous edition in this book.

If you don't have an iPod already, you will want to get this book to help you with your decision to jump in and join the new dancers on the Apple iPod commercials.

Maybe you don't have an iPod, but want one and don't know why. Maybe you are suffering from an acute bout of ipodophilia (no, it isn't what you are thinking), I'm calling a feeling of friendship for an iPod. It's the "in thing" now.

The iPod people are coming! Lots of them are located here: <http://www.ipodlounge.com/>.

Okay, back to the book; It simply rocks. Christopher has done a magnificent job on this 3rd edition. It includes information on the iTunes Music Store (3). There is a fat chapter on iPods and PCs (4) but it needs to be updated further now that iTunes is PC-enabled. Another one discusses using the iPod as a backup drive (5). And the next chapter is about using it as a contact manager (6), followed naturally by dating (7) er, calendaring, 3rd-party parts (8) and of course, troubleshooting (9). So what's missing? The book really needs its own website similar to this one: <http://www.ipoding.com/>.

Maybe the 4th edition will have stuff on how to use the iPod for video-phone service. Oh, an audio-video iPod! Wouldn't that be a natural progression? Check here for more accessories: <http://www.apple.com/ipod/accessories.html>.

Grab this book for a quick read on the iPod phenomena.

Your Ad could be here!

The **Unusually Useful** Web Book



The Unusually Useful Web Book Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: June Cohen
New Riders Publishing, MAY 23, 2003
nrfeedback@newriders.com
<http://www.newriders.com>
408 Pages
\$35 USD, \$55 CAN, £18.96 Net UK
ISBN: 0735712069



Strengths: Shows lots of tried-and-true do-it-yourself processes that have worked over time for building e-commerce websites.

Weaknesses: No website of its own, apparently.

The Unusually Useful Web Book by June Cohen is intended for folks who would feel comfortable cuddling up to an overview kind of book on how to put an e-commerce type website together. The formulas and lessons-learned, the steps, ways and lists are all organized to help make websites succeed.

Since we are working on a website that we would like to see succeed, I felt that by reading this book it would help reach that objective. It is not intended to be a "technical" book, but it is intended to be used as part of the process in planning, designing, building and maintaining a website.

This is another book I heavily bookmarked, dog-eared and highlighted. By doing so, I just about doubled its width. Our former webmaster (he moved on to making real money for a living) had told me much of what is written here, but now I have it all in writing!

I find it to be a companion-piece to Zelman's book I reviewed last month. These two books should be a 2-volume set. This one would be considered a higher-level book and that one would be the technical part missing from this one. Never fear, June Cohen links to further readings and study in "On the web" sections in nearly all of the 15 chapters. The Appendix is a list of experts and some of their sage advice. It is a book I needed to read – now!

So what can be found inside the 408 pages? How about information on increasing traffic, visitor frequency, search engine rankings (how to do it correctly and not incorrectly), selecting traffic analysis applications, getting a website up quickly and inexpensively, project team development and "Lessons from the Trenches" from folks that do this for a living. The sidebars alone could fill a book. Oh, they do already.

The book is a smorgasborg of tasty tips that are presented in digestible soup-to-nuts chunks and can be easily savored over time. You can't take it all in, in one sitting. There is just too much to do if you want to use it with a workbook approach to e-commercing a website.

I'm going to put into practice the marketing and business aspects of the book.

What June Cohen has done is take experiential anecdotes, mixed them with words of wisdom from real-time experts and served up an excellent meal of well-organized tips and techniques on business webbing.

If you want to see pretty pictures, then look at the cartoons that head just about every chapter. They are pencil-drawings with cogent captions. It is nice to know web-designers and practitioners have a wonderful sense of humor.

The other parts I liked about the book were the case studies of sites that became successes using simple techniques we've started to integrate on our site already. There is nothing quite like knowing that some of those gut-instinct feelings really work and that "show-me's" can be found online.

Would you like some numbers? 20 do-it-yourself worksheets on site improvements, 25 lessons from the trenches on daily challenges that face webmasters and webmistresses and 50 lessons-learned from website experts. All are immediately useful. Just don't try to tackle the job all at once. Remember, a site is a process in progress and not a project that is really ever completed.

This is an unusually readable reference book that will get used. Note that the book's subtitle is: "Everything we've learned about why sites succeed!". I think it lives up to its title.

Perhaps the reason it doesn't have a dedicated "book site" except for what is on NewRiders, is that it ties in to so many others.

Hardware



HARMONi G3 600MHz Processor Upgrade/FireWire Card Combo

Reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves

Sonnet Technologies

8 Autry

Irvine, CA 92618

(949) 587-3500

<http://www.sonnettech.com>

\$350 USD

Requirements: iMac 233, 266 and 333 MHz models (Revisions A-D)

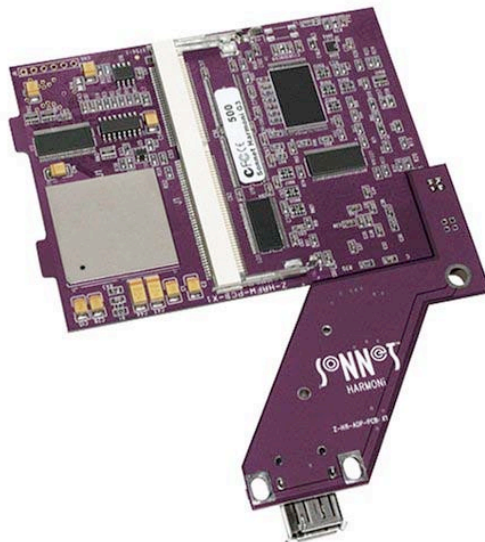
Level of experience needed: Technical



Strengths: Enables original iMac models to use iMovie, iSight, iPod, other FireWire devices, increases CPU power.

Weaknesses: 600MHz G3 not as useful as a G4 nowadays.

If you've got a Revision A-D iMac, and there are plenty of folks who do, the HARMONi G3 Processor Upgrade/FireWire Card Combo will help bring it a step forward into today's computing world. The hardware product is composed of two parts: a 600MHz G3 processor with a 256K Level 2 Cache and a FireWire port.



The revision A-D iMacs, which can be identified by their tray-loading CD-ROM drives and the hinged door on their right side, run from 233MHz to 333MHz, so the performance jump to 600MHz will vary depending on model. A 600MHz G3 is not a super-fast processor by today's standards, especially since Apple has now officially banished all G3 processors from their lineup. But coming from 233 or even 333, it's an enjoyable step up. I've been able to rip CDs in iTunes at a maximum rate of 3.8x, up from 2.2x.

600MHz is also the minimum processor requirement for performing video chats using iChatAV. Of course, the other requirement for performing a video chat with iChatAV is to use a FireWire webcam like Apple's iSight. And the HARMONi adds this functionality to these older iMac models, too.

The FireWire port adds a world of functionality: the iSight, iPod and DVD-R, CD-RW and external drives. It also allows you to use digital cameras and DV camcorders, so you can finally use iMovie. You cannot, however, use your DV camcorder with iChat AV, as that requires a G4 processor.

The HARMONi works with both Mac OS 9 and OS X 10.1-10.2 and the instructions provided are detailed and easy to follow. If you aren't comfortable taking apart your iMac to put RAM in, you should have a technician install it. I've taken mine apart numerous times, and chose to do it myself. It's certainly nerve-wracking, but when I ran into a little trouble, the phone support at Sonnet ably helped me through it (turned out I hadn't fitted the processor securely).

Overall, there is only so much upgrading that can be done to an iMac, which was not designed with customization in mind. The major hindrance is the video card and limited amount of VRAM, which simply cannot be upgraded. But thanks to its built-in USB ports, these cute little machines are still Panther-capable.

Although the HARMONi's G3 upgrade isn't lightning-fast, it does what it can, and if you want to get more life out of yours, this is a great way to do it. It will enable you to enjoy most of the digital lifestyle. Rather than purchase a brand new iMac, you could get this upgrade along with some FireWire devices.

And it comes with a three-year warranty, if yours manages to last that much longer.

Shareware



Check Off v.2.3 and 2.3.1

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

by Ricci Adams ©2002-2003

Release date: Tuesday, October 14, 2003

<http://homepage.mac.com/ricciadams/programs/checkoff/>

License: Shareware. A personal license for Check Off costs a mere **\$5 USD**. Another rarity: it can be installed on up to any 10 computers that you own.

System Requirements: v. 2.3 needs Mac OS X 10.2 or later.

v. 2.3.1 needs Mac OS X 10.2.6 or later.



Strengths: Works as advertised.

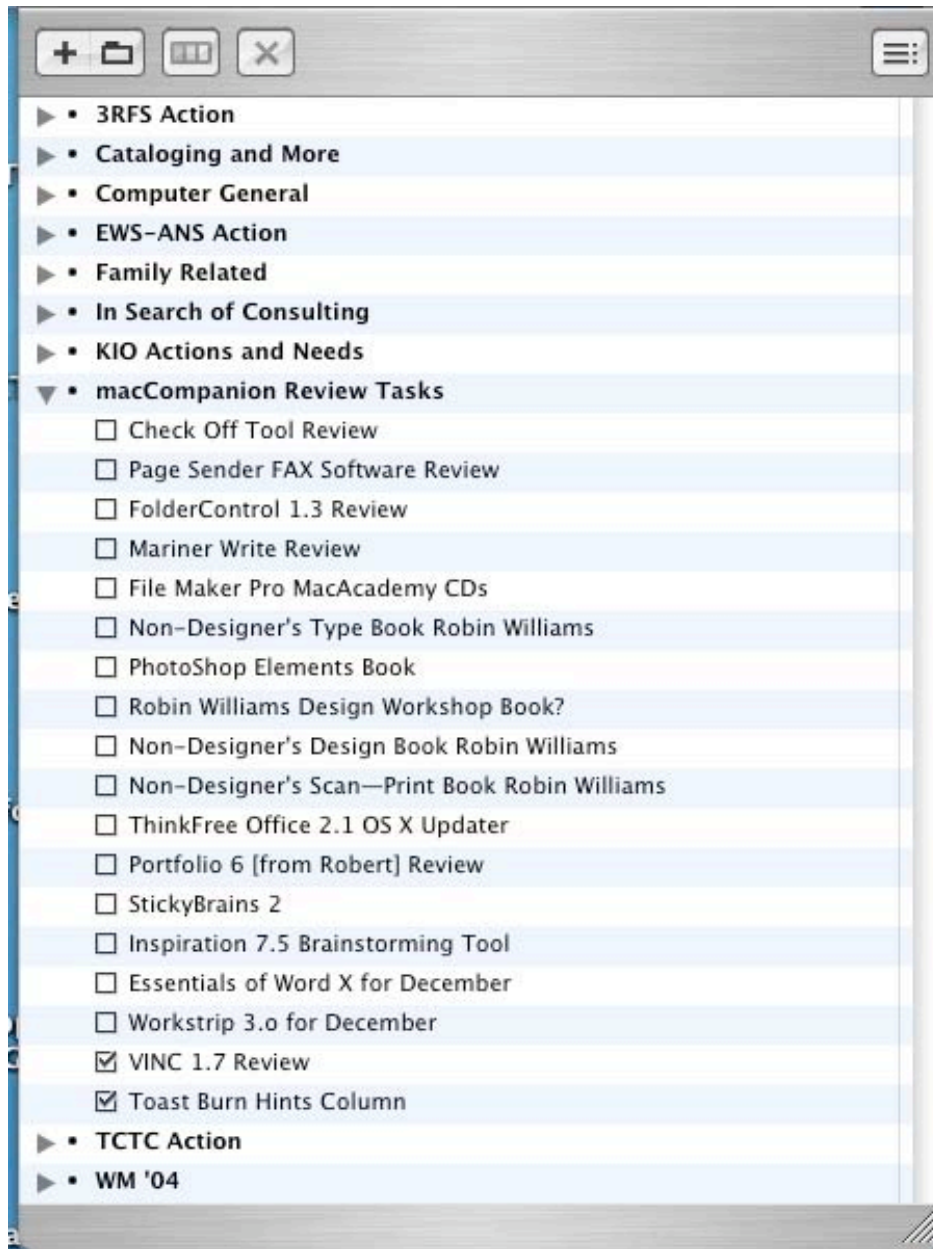
Weaknesses: Exporting and Rich Text Format issues need to be resolved yet.

Check Off is a straightforward, almost intuitive, and easy to use "to-do" list that resides in your Finder's menu bar. No more monitors covered with PostIt™ notes or other note taking tools in paper or electronic form.

Simply click the check mark at the top of your screen and your to-do list will appear. After launching Check Off, a check mark will be added to your menu bar).



To display your to-do list, simply click on the check mark.



After clicking on the check mark, the to-do list will drop down. There are five buttons used to control the list. A brief description of each of these items and their function will let the reader understand the straightforwardness of the software interface.

[Add an Item](#) adds a to-do item to your to-do list.

[Add Group](#) adds a group (folder) you can use to group a collection of "common theme" to-do list items.

[Change Color](#) changes the font color for the selected items or groups. This can be used to designate priority, but that for me is more effort than I want to spend. The colors and their meanings are easily customized in the Check Off preference panel.

[Remove Item or Group](#) simply removes an item or group from your to-do list.

Clicking on the [Options](#) Icon displays the options submenu, which includes Preferences, Print, Export, About Check Off, and Quit selections alternatives

Once you have added items to your to-do list, you can double click on the title to edit that description. It is easy to change the order of items and groups [folders] by simply using "drag and drop." The software indicates the new destination location by a line. The line cursor not only locates top-to-bottom location but, also, like an outline, the left-to-right location for a to-do item or group.

Shortcut "Columns" Features

The main Check Off window is divided into two vertical panels. The larger panel lists your "groups" and "items". On the right-hand side, a slim section provides a place to insert a "shortcut" link to a document that represents that task. This column allows you to select link files and applications on your hard drive with tasks in your to-do list. For example, suppose you have a "Write Check Off Review" task. Simply locate the corresponding file on your hard drive and drag it to your list. After it is linked, a small icon will appear to the right of the task. You can launch the selected file by clicking on this small icon. Unlike a typical alias, if you change the name of the selected document, you've broken the link to the task. This is a minor issue when working with multiple drafts of a document. To remove a link, Control-click on an item then select "Unlink shortcut(s)" You then can add the newly titled document to the shortcut column to reestablish the link.

Other Check Off Features

Check Off can export your notes to HTML (.html), OmniOutliner™ (.opml), Plain text (.txt) in clear but passive outline form, or Rich Text (.rtf) formats. I found that exporting to RTF, which created a "Text Edit" document, caused the information to be displayed in a variety of seemingly random font sizes with almost complete loss of formatting. This made that export mode useless without having to further manipulate the file by inserting it into Mariner Write™ or Microsoft Word™ and reformatting the contents. My single attempt to export the file to OmniOutliner v.2.2.5 failed: the software did not recognize the document. Since I don't yet use OmniOutliner, this is not a significant issue for me.

The software's developer, Ricci Adams, has provided excellent keyboard shortcuts, a boon for those who prefer keyboarding to mousing around. The excellent user guide, which is replete with illustrations, allow those who'd rather read than "intuit" a simple way to get started as well as to check out all the features of this fine software. It even provides instructions to enable auto launching of Check Off when you start your computer.

Other than the problem I had with exporting to RTF, I got into trouble only by fooling the List transparency function [preferences > appearance]. Moving the slide bar to maximize transparency made the Check Off window disappear. Nothing I tried allowed me to get it back, so I reinstalled the software. The good news is that when I reinstalled the software, the main window in Check Off still contained my entire set of checklist items. Version 2.3.1 fixes the "over" transparency problem by limiting transparency to 80%.

Conclusions

There are two additional features, and one feature "repair" I'd welcome in future releases. The first would be the ability to zoom the list, enlarging the font size to make it easier to read. Second, I'd like to be able to move the main Check Off window (e.g., as a floating a pallet) to make it easier to use the "shortcut" feature. And having a functional RTF export mode would be helpful.

In the three days I used the software, I've trashed dozens of to-do notes and Check Off has become an indispensable part of my computing tools. This software is a must buy.

Try it! You'd like it! Oh, yeah, there is a down side to using this software. From the illustration of my to-do list, both you and my publisher can see just how far behind I am on my reviews!



FolderControl v.1.30

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

by Bryan Derman ©2002-2003
Derman Enterprises, Incorporated
Release date—10-06-03 (v.1.30)
s-bed@derman.com
<http://www.derman.com/>
\$22 USD, License: Shareware
System Requirements: 3.6 MB Mac OS X
10.2.



Strengths: Great folder controller and organizer.

Weaknesses: Personal preferences take time to set up.

Summary

Software that allows you to set up your folder windows with the placement and look you crave! In plain words, "FolderControl is a utility to automatically size and arrange the Finder's folder/directory windows into the configuration you define." This software is perfect for *anal-retentive Macintosh users and obsessive folder organizers just like me! Look closely at your monitor, open some tiered folders, and see-feel if the shoe fits!*

Introduction

As I'm still having withdrawal symptoms from NeatNik™, I was delighted to trip over Bryan Derman's FolderControl™ shareware on Version Tracker. (Or was it Mac Update?) As many of

my readers know, I am a shareware junkie, who crafts, on a bimonthly basis, a collection of personal download favorites. (Doesn't "crafts" sound professional?)

As noted by its developer, "FolderControl is a utility to automatically size and arrange the Finder's folder/directory windows into the configuration you define. Numerous preferences give you control over ...

- * which folders participate in the processing
- * how folder windows are sized, both vertically and horizontally
- * how sub-folder windows are arranged, relative to their enclosing folders
- * how various folder-window attributes, such as sorting and view kind, are set
- * the permissions on the files that control these capabilities"

To arrange folders, you select the collection of folders to be processed. These folders can be input to Folder Control either by using the Finder's drag and drop capability (via FolderControl's "Specify Folders..." menu) or, for those enlightened few, via UNIX-style command-line features.



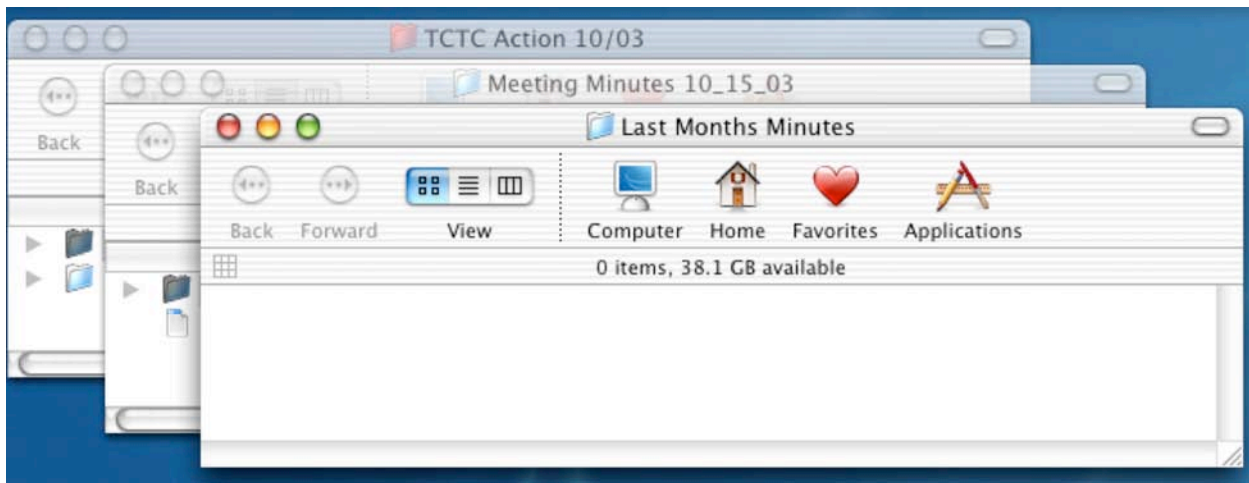
The software comes with help files, and the publisher's web page contains detailed and helpful FAQs and identifies "known issues."

More about FolderControl

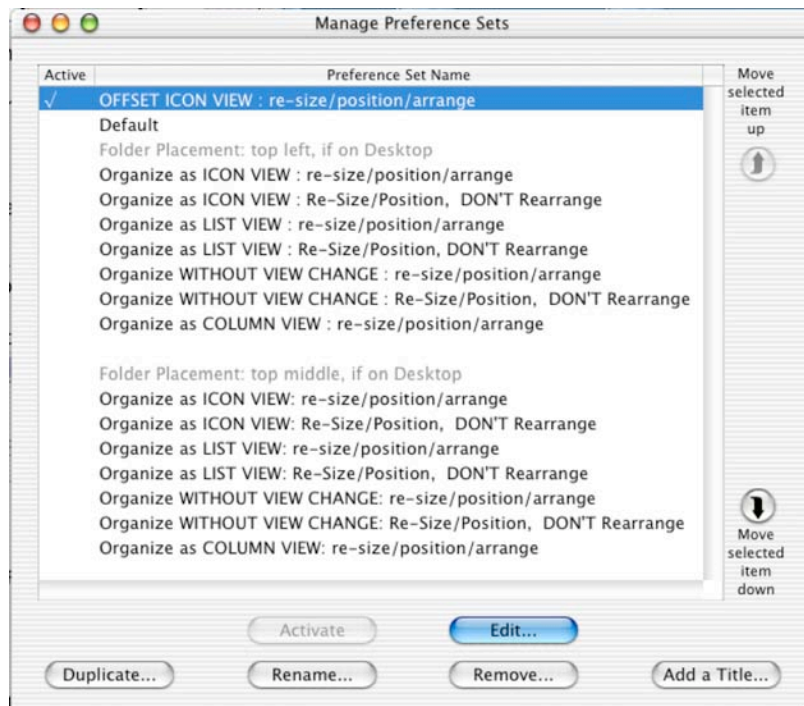
Who Needs Folder Control? [Abstracted from the publishers site]

- You publish software/data CDs/DVDs and are uncomfortable with Finder windows in random locations and views.
- You used NeatNik™ or Finder View Settings™ under Mac OS 9, and cried and wrung your hands when they were gone.
- You've often been brought to \$#@#*&^#% while fighting to gain consistency with OS X's Finder windows. (Even when I tell Jaguar that I want always to use list view, calculate folder sizes ... you know the rest of that story!)
- On your professional looking data CD, you'd like users to notice folder locations (nested folder depth)(by just looking at easy to view window title-bars.

Well, my favorite view for nested folders is an offset-list view, offset vertically by 24 pixels and horizontally by 48 pixels. But getting there was more complicated than I expected, having teathed on NeatNik. Since my primary interest was in alternative implementations for "List View", a bit of trial and error worked for me.

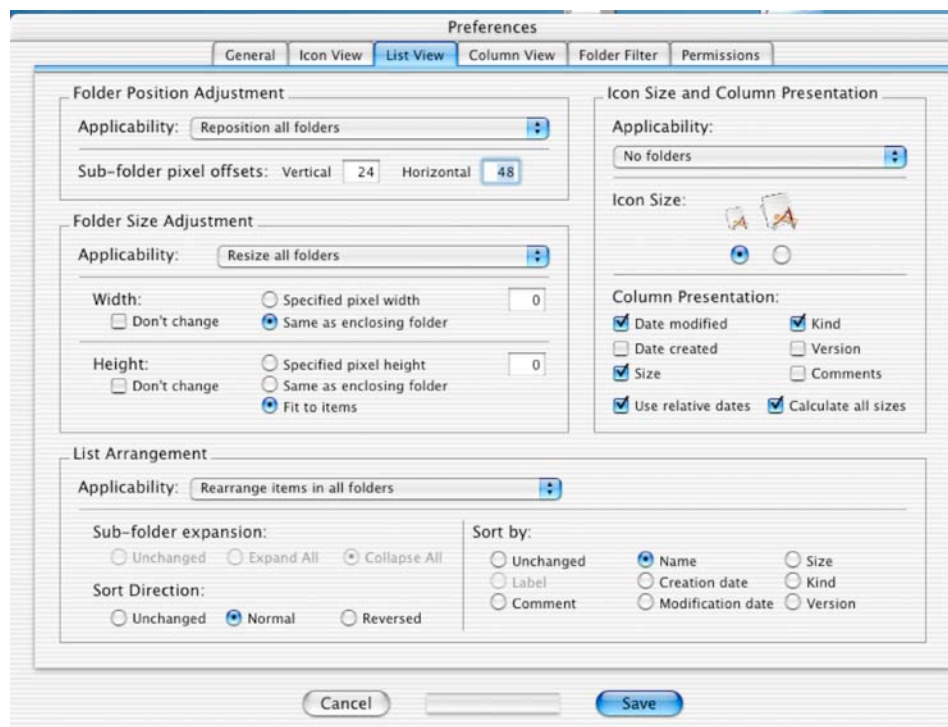
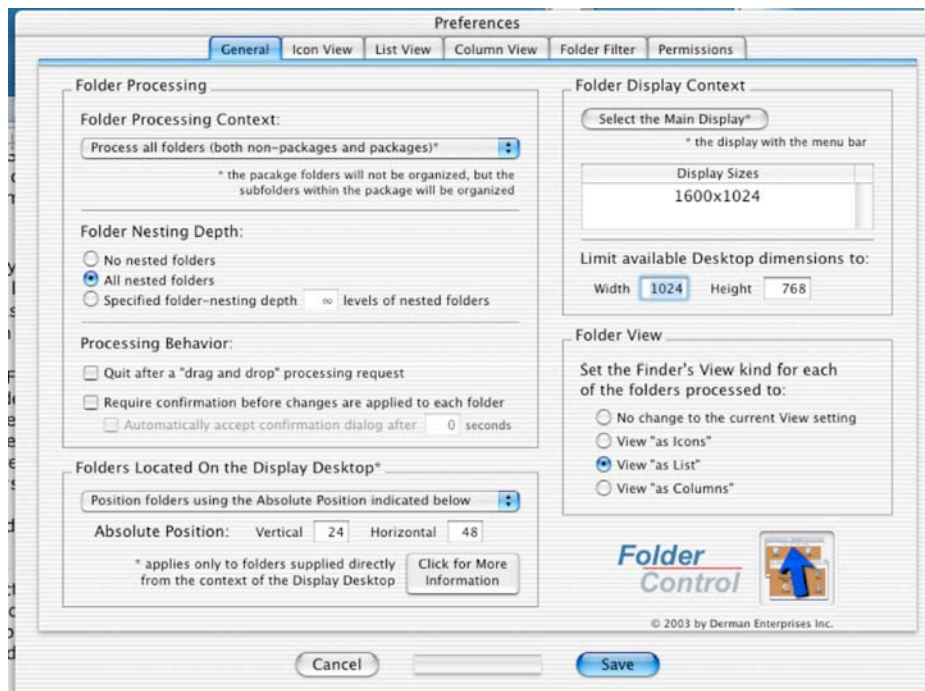


Everything I tried worked and provided a stable folder arrangement that could be reused as desired. However, the brief narrative tags describing the alternative layout options (preferences) were not intuitive. A bit of trial-and-error, using a small folder with three tiers of document-containing sub-folders as a test example, quickly allowed me to determine their individual attributes. Oh, for some explicit definitions of terms and for more examples accompanied by "set up" instructions!



Examples of minimally defined terms include re-size, position, arrange, or rearrange. An explicit definition is needed of the differences between "absolute position" and "window offset." Details

about the use of folder size adjustment features should also be discussed in the Help files. I've illustrated the initial complexity of FolderControl below.



I was, after several hour of "play," able to achieve the desired nested offset list view folder arrangement. You OS 9.x switchers, note that this more complex operation was achieved in the "plainer" NeatNik by typing the desired horizontal and vertical offsets into "check boxes" and looking at the resulting image. But should a new user need to resort to trial-and-error if they wanted to use any but the dozen or so author predefined defined layouts? I don't believe so!

(Note that illustrations in the help files include 4 examples of icon view alternatives, 2 of column views, and none in list view.)

Of less concern, reorganizing a disk image for a CD takes time. The software does slow down while processing large sets of deeply nested subfolders (my shareware CDs). For non-CD preparation uses, that slowness can be countered, as stated in the FAQ, by just processing smaller folders groups.

Conclusions

I quickly paid the shareware fee when I rapidly found this really works as advertised. Even with the amount of time it took to get to the specific arrangements I prefer, I have no regrets about my impulsive purchase. The software is highly configurable and has many features that will appear to you, whether you use Icon, List, or even Windows Column view. By contrast, a few months ago I trashed an AppleScript-based folder arrangement solution I found on Version Tracker ... no names now ... after trying for about 10 minutes to let it make me "happy." If you have already invested time in creating specialized AppleScripts to manage your nested folders, according to the publisher, FolderControl can import and use them.

To create the initial set of new preference definition sets to use routinely, I had to do a significant amount of trial-and-error testing. It's not that using trial-and-error doesn't work! However, not all potential users will want to spend the time needed to create their individualized preferences. The lack of detailed images of alternatives, and the failure to define the detailed software preference functions and the terms that describe each preference template mar this otherwise feature-filled, useful, and stable software.

In summary, if you like an orderly desktop, you'll love this product! I am, however, eagerly awaiting an update with more help definitions, so I can more fully test out other alternative folder settings with a minimal investment in time.

Software



Cleaner □ 6

Reviewed by Shane French

Discreet

10 rue Duke

Montréal, Québec, Canada H3C 2L7

Tel: 514-393-1616 or 1-800-869-3504

Fax: 514-393-0110 or 1-800-305-6442

product_info@discreet.com

Desktop Products Hotline

1-514-393-8832 or 1-866-317-1011

<http://www.discreet.com/>

<http://www.discreet.com/products/cleaner/cleaner6/>

<http://support.discreet.com/>

\$600 USD, Upgrade \$160 USD

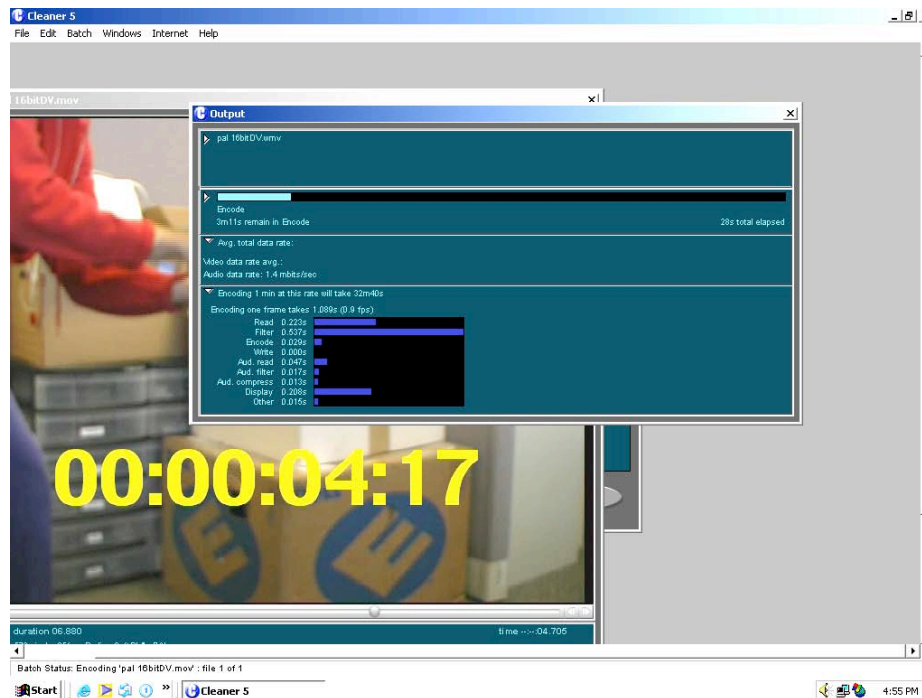
Requirements: PowerPC ® G3 or faster processor (recommended: G4 or G4 dual processor), Mac ®OS 9.1 or higher and Mac OS X v10.1 or higher, QuickTime ®5 or higher, 128 MB of RAM (recommended: 256 MB of RAM), Display card supporting 1024x768 resolution and 16-bit color (recommended: 24-bit color), CD-ROM drive, 20 MB of available hard drive space
Beginner to Expert.



Strengths: High-quality Import/Export of a wide variety of audio/video formats. Includes more than 150 presets designed by professional users. Presets can be duplicated and (optionally) renamed, then modified and saved, with the ability to create custom folders directly within the application. Some encoding options become available directly from within editing applications like Final Cut Pro. Output can be sent to a network or streaming media or FTP server directly. Contextual menus for accessing settings and other functions in Cleaner 6. Integrated Kinoma video encoding engine for handheld video.

Weaknesses: Not inexpensive.

Discreet's Cleaner 6 is a Macintosh OS X and OS9 video and audio encoding package that also offers interactive authoring features. It encodes and compresses files for DVD, the Web, video CD and PDA and offers support for QuickTime, Windows Media, RealSystem (OS 9 only), AVI, MPEG-1, MPEG-2, MPEG-4 and various audio and still image formats. And it handles filtering, cropping, effects and metadata (metadata describes other data).



One of the most important updates to Cleaner 6 is the 'Watch Folder' feature, which allows Cleaner to monitor a folder anywhere on the network and begin encoding as soon as a new file appears in this folder. Another timesaving enhancement is the ability to specify multiple output formats and codecs in a single visit to the Settings dialog. You can Shift- or Command-select any number of the presets that ship with Cleaner 6 to specify multiple outputs, or select any number of user-defined presets.

Being an avid user of Cleaner 5, I was immediately at home with the updated Aqua interface and the improved navigation. I was also impressed with the near 50% speed boost. On the surface Cleaner 6 is an extremely straightforward, simple application. But don't let simplicity fool you into thinking that this isn't a professional tool. When it comes to audio and video formats, Cleaner 6 has everything covered. It's packed with 150 fine-tuned presets to compress your DVDs, web media, cell phones and PDA video. For custom needs just modify an existing preset or create your own from scratch – then save it and organize it your own folders.

Working with Cleaner 6 has simply been easy and effective. For example, six months ago I compressed some 60 .wmf training videos for a software company into QuickTime. First, I found a QuickTime preset that was close to what I needed, and then I lowered the frame rate to reduce to overall size of the movie. The training video didn't have much motion, so dropping the frame rate to 10 FPS wasn't disrupting. I compressed the video and found that it was now one-third the original file size.

That means that the 15 CD's of training videos could be reduced to 5 (scoring huge bonus points with my client). Of course I didn't want to compress 60 videos one by one, so I copied all the video files from the 15 CD's to a folder on my desktop and dropped them into the Batch Window. I returned to my office in the morning to find all 60 files neatly organized and compressed. Then, two months later the same client sent over four more training videos to be compressed. Of course I'd never remember the exact settings, but calling up the preset and running the batch on the additional videos was a snap.

Cleaner 6 includes a thorough, easily to follow manual and helpful glossary. It is also available for purchase via the Discreet online store in a box or a convenient download (<http://www.discreet.com/store>). If you need to compress audio or video in multiple formats in a quick and organized way then Cleaner 6 is a must have.

Your Ad could be here!



Emailchemy

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Weird Kid Software, LLC
4510 Elmhurst Ave
Royal Oak, MI 48073
contact@weirdkid.com
<http://www.weirdkid.com/>
Trialware: Single \$25 USD, household, \$49 USD,
Site, \$500 USD, Enterprise, \$2,500 USD through
<http://secure.emetrix.com/order/allproducts.asp?DID=6840320>
Requirements: Mac OS X, version 10.1.3 or higher
with the Java 1.3.1 Update 1 installed or Mac OS X,
version 10.2 or higher.



Strengths: Cross-platform email content converter, even when the original application is missing.

Weaknesses: "Must have software"? Only if you have been using legacy systems, like, forever.

Emailchemy by *Weird Kid Software* is a product intended for folks who frequent various email applications either within or across platforms. This "trialware" package is Java-based and works well when transferring email files (including attachments) between Apple and other Unix variants and Microsoft WinTel machines.

Both onsite and in the included documentation, the author has done an excellent job showing both how this product works and how various email programs operate in transferring email "boxes" back and forth. This is a "try before you buy" application for Mac OS X (and other Operating Systems) so go ahead and download it and see for yourself – especially if you have legacy system email archives that need to be brought in to your current email application.

This is a perfect solution for someone (and I have a few folks in mind) who can't or won't move to a later updated system because they have all this old email they think they will lose in doing so. Now they have no excuse.

Personally, I can't see why they keep it around. Create a real hard-copy Letterbook for business and print what is needed and toss the rest. Even the IRS doesn't expect electronic files to be around longer than 5 years. But if you absolutely, positively have to dig back into your "CYA" (cover your lower backside) files, then this is a great way to get into those, even when the original application has disappeared over time. Yes, that's right. **Emailchemy** can grab those old

email "boxes" and convert them to what you are currently using, assuming they comply with email standards.

Did you know there was an E-mail Format standard? Check out Request For Comment (RFC) 822, <http://www.faqs.org/rfcs/rfc822.html> and RFC 2822, <http://www.faqs.org/rfcs/rfc2822.html>.

Think of **Emailchemy** as being an email GraphicConverter[®] or an email Dataviz[®]. It grabs proprietary email formats and reconstructs those into a portable format any application can put to use.

So is \$25 worth being able to repair, clean, condense, move and convert email files? How about preparing them for use in a database? I think so.

A long list of formats are listed on the website. Those can be rewritten into Unix or Mac Mail.app-style "mboxes", comma-separated value (CSV) files, .txt or .eml folders and for those who prefer, even Eudora. When using the CSV format, files then are ready to be imported into a database system such as Access, Oracle, MySQL, or PostgreSQL I bet it even works with FileMaker[®] Pro.

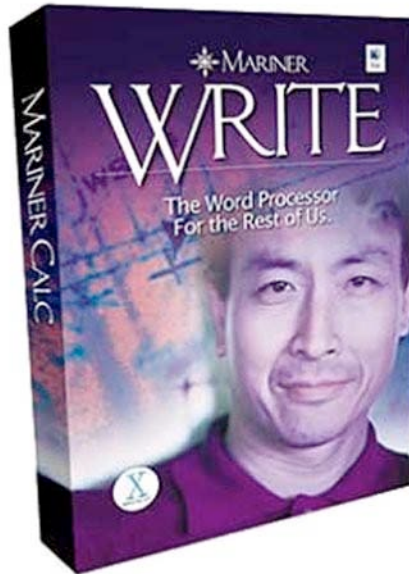
For non-Mac systems such as Windows[®], Linux, Solaris[®], or Unix, **Emailchemy** requires that Java, version 1.3.1 or higher, be installed, located at <http://java.sun.com/getjava>.

No matter which platform is used, helpful wizards guide us through the 3 or 4 step acquisition and conversion process. A lot of thought and effort has been put into this package and I think you will be pleased with the results as you put it through its paces.

Both the site and the included documentation have copious notes on how to import to a myriad moundful of email programs including Outlook[®] and Exchange[®] and other applications.

The folks at *Weird Kid Software* are willing to work with you if you happen to run into a format that isn't supported.

If you are transferring email files from platform to platform, email program to email program or want to use them in some kind of database, get this product!



Mariner Write® v.3.5.1

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Mariner Software
4334 Upton Avenue North
Minneapolis, MN 55412 USA
1-612-529-3770
(fax) 612-529-3775

www.marinersoftware.com

Downloading the software \$69 USD, boxed copy for \$79. The latest version (3.5.1) is a FREE upgrade for all registered v.3.0 users. Pre-version 3.0 customers can upgrade to 3.5.1 for \$25 USD. Macintosh User Group Members can save 40% on a new copy. Native both Mac OS X and Classic Mac versions.

Requirements: 3.3 MB, 2 MB of memory on a PPC Mac running 9.0-OS X. Tested on a Power Macintosh G4 using Mac OS X, v.10.2.8



Strengths: 80% of the features of Microsoft Word at only 25% of the price.

Weaknesses: Lacking export features.

Overview

Whether you are creating a simple document or composing your next great computing book, Mariner Write™ (MW) has the functionality to be your main word processing tool. It is the word processor for those of us who want a full featured, low CPU-overhead word processor that can relatively easily exchange information (import and export) with MS Word. If you are a MS Word user who does not need its full features, making the transition to MW is surprisingly easy. It is a

powerful yet streamlined word processor for the Macintosh. Boasting an elegant and easy-to-use interface, Mariner Write will run on only 2 MB of RAM. It contains most, if not all, of the features found in the professional-grade version of MS Word.

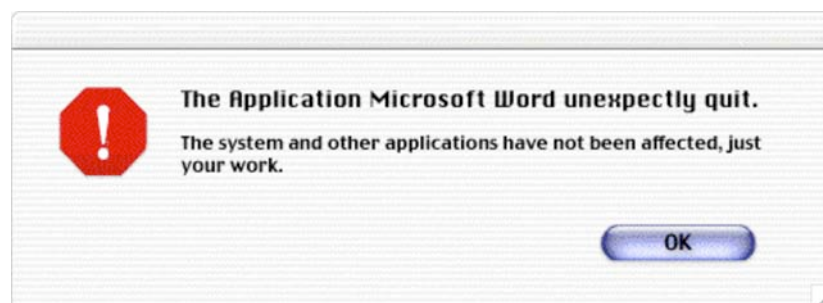
Introduction

Never having used Mariner Write, I chose to write this software review entirely with this software. I am, and have been for professional reasons, a long-time, (v.3.5 or earlier) serious user of MS Word (MSW), having with genuine ferocity avoided the earlier "corporate standard" Word Perfect®. My incentive for my trying and reviewing Mariner Write was learning that one of my favorite authors; Robin Williams of "The Mac is not a Typewriter fame," uses Mariner Write to create initial drafts of her books.

To keep this review in perspective, you should know that I have been a MSW user from the time the software was distributed on floppy disks. I've also chipped with, but never got serious about, Nisus Writer™, and worked with both the ThinkFree Office™ and AppleWorks™ word processing tools. So, for me to be comfortable with a word processing program, it must allow me to be operational with a minimal learning curve. Mariner Write met this goal. In learning to use MW, I was continuously surprised how many features of MSW it contained, and how easy it was for a long-term MSW user to create documents in Mariner Write.

There are many viable options for both home and office users of Apple products. AppleWorks and ThinkFree Office are inexpensive office suites. Nisus Writer is inexpensive and appears relatively compatible with MSW. However, this review will not compare, except in passing, the attributes of alternatives to MSW. Articles on Nisus Writer and ThinkFree Office have appeared in previous editions of macCompanion.com. Until discovering Mariner Write, I had never seriously thought to augment or replace my word processing tools, but Mariner Write is so easy to use and robust that it will remain installed on my hard disk as a casual alternative to MSW. The other alternatives I've tested have long been removed.

Version 3.5.1 of MW even imports Word files created in both the Windows and Macintosh versions of the Microsoft program, a feature the developers have significantly enhanced in versions starting with 3.5



Evaluation of Mariner Writes Features Set

Generally, the feature set found in Mariner Write is now the norm for contemporary word processing programs. At the root of user acceptability is a rich set of features, and, equally

important, how easily and effectively they work. Side-by-side, many of the Mariner Write features parallel those in MSW. As listed below, the word processing features I find critical are well executed in MW.

Installation—Open the software's disk image, drag the Mariner Write folder to your application folder, double-click on the application icon, type in your password—you bought it, didn't you? Voilà, you're ready to start composing purple prose.

User Interface—*The interface is simple and uncluttered. As you can see in the above graphic, the main toolbar offers easy access to commonly used functions. As with any good Mac program, there are accompanying customizable keyboard shortcuts.*

Style Sheets—This feature is easy to set up and adjust. It is significantly less awkward and complex than in MS Word. By comparison with other word processors, changing style sheet definitions in MW is an easy task.

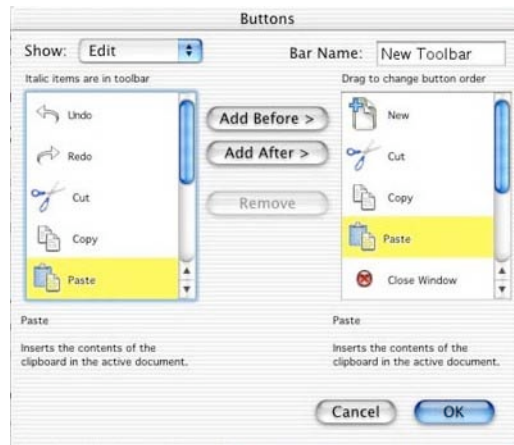
Footnotes—Inserting and deleting footnotes is simple and easy to do. Footnotes initially appear as a separate window, but when you've finished creating them and close the footnotes window, the footnote(s) appears on the document page. Since footnotes are the key to much of my work in nuclear waste management, I was pleased, in comparison to MSW, by how easily they worked.

Tables—Much of my technical writing is loaded with simple, or more often, complex tables. I was surprised to find the "Table" command was located under the FORMAT menu, instead of the INSERT menu like in MSW. But, all the usual table features worked as they should have, e.g., merging and splitting cells, text to table conversion, and vice versa. Creating and modifying tables in MW is a no-brainer.

Columns—In some of my documents created in MSW, I use columns as an alternative to using borderless tables, especially when flipping material between portrait and landscape view. But unlike MSW, columns in Mariner Write apply to the entire document. But, a potential alternative, creating borderless tables in MW to mimic partial column views, is easy, and doesn't require hard page breaks.

Headers/Footers—The first time I used the headers/footer command (under FORMAT menu, not under VIEW, as I might expect), it was a little confusing. But after a couple of minutes, I figured out what to do. Someone approaching MW as a complete word processing novice might require more time. However, adding or modifying headers and footers in MW documents worked efficiently and effectively.

Customizing Toolbars and Establishing Keyboard Preferences—*In comparing Mariner Write with MSW, MW offers fewer options to change the work environment. However, except for customization addicts (Me - me - me!), Mariner Write offers all the flexibility that most advanced users would need. The "Menu" tab in the preferences panel provides many options for keyboard shortcuts, essential for those who work with repeated tasks, sparing the wrist from repeated mouse movements. Adding or otherwise customizing tool bar features is also straightforward. As I continue to use the software, I will likely customize the shortcuts and too bar feature, changing them to agree with those I've created in MSW X.*



Mariner Dictionaries—One of the strengths of Mariner Write lies in its ability to handle multiple languages. Non-English users can, at no cost, download non-English dictionaries on the Mariner site.

The Manual—The ninety-one page PDF manual is logically organized, avoiding the "techno speak" common to many manuals. From its "Introduction" and the initial "Working with MW Documents," to its culminating chapter on "Mail Merge," the manual provided information I needed on less intuitive features of this strong word processing package. Better yet, it was easy to find. The copious graphics should easily enable a new user who wishes to avoid trial and error to kick-start the application and hit the ground running (I love mixed metaphors.)

Graphics Insertion—You can insert graphics as either inline images or floating objects with the ability to text wrap. I have utilized such features in other documents, but not directly for this review. However, it worked great in my tests of MW. You can use a PICT, EPS, GIF, PDF, or JPEG files as your graphic source. I had a bit of trouble with images where I had dinked with the size and image resolutions, so I sought out help from Mariner.

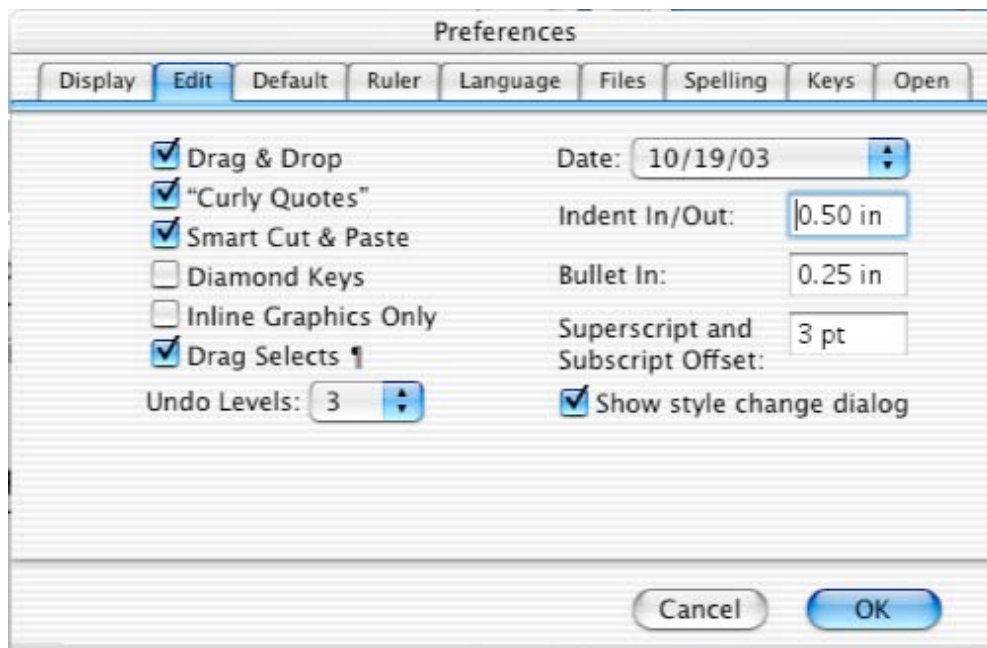
The issue was that some of my graphics, when inserted into a MW document, were too large and overflowed the page edges. There were no drag bars surrounding the image, a feature I have often used in MSW to change the size of an image. There is an absolute requirement that the graphic you want to insert must have been previously sized with the resolution selected to meet your space needs. This was one of the very few MW idiosyncrasies that weren't obvious from either reading the manual or found during my tests.

To resolve this problem, I e-mailed the publisher. My message was passed though to technical support, and I got a phone response that same day. (*Bill Gates, are you listening, or are all those jobs still being sent to India?*) The return phone call clarified the limitations on image size-resolution associated with importing graphics. If you are just copying a graphic from a document in another program, all is fine. The image characteristics will remain the same. If you have images that either come from other sources, or which you've manipulated, then you will need to rework the graphic in GraphicConverter™ or PhotoShop Elements™ or another graphic tool. Other than that omission, the manual provides complete and straightforward instructions for placing a graphic into a MW document. Options include inserting the graphic as a character (not easily manipulated) or as a movable object (with text wrap around options.) Hey folks, dinking with graphics is a little bit like playing with your food, isn't it?

Help Files—This, too, was a great surprise. Usually, a software's "Help" files appear kludged together as an afterthought. Help files can be obtuse, cryptic, fragmented or incomplete. This is not the case with MW. Like the manual, I found Mariner Write Help clearly written and simple to use. (Bill Gates, are you listening?)

Import Abilities—This software can intelligently and accurately import MSW documents, including those with tables and bulleted lists. As stated in the MW manual, "Graphics existing as objects in Mariner Write documents are not exported. The graphic must be reinserted as a character." A workaround, albeit a bit awkward, is to extract the graphics information from the source by dragging and dropping to your desktop, or copying it to the clipboard. Then reinsert the graphic where it belongs. Otherwise, direct imports from MSW have most of the expected attributes. The software also allows usable, stylistically accurate, but not perfect export to MS Word via either "RTF format MW" or "RTF format MSW" filters. Mariner does not promise full compatibility, and Write won't provide it. But, importing graphics-free MSW files, even large and stylistically complex ones is quick. In my brief experience, the converted files were close enough to their original MSW versions that no insurmountable headaches arose.

Other Odd and Ends—The software also has a utility called "Drop Doc", which will automatically convert any MSW file (.doc) to an RTF file that is then opened flawlessly by Write. So, now you can convert all those old documents without any difficulties. I also enjoy the ease of the interconversion of curly and straight quotes (Menu > Edit > Modify.) This is something I've become too aware of, while reading Robin William's books.



Features I Miss

The items I list below are associated with "old age" and hard to change habits. They are peevish - foibles - grumps, and don't detract from the overall usability of Mariner Write. Indeed, finding a few things to criticize is a part of the "reviewer's handbook."

- The ability to check the grammar of my documents. But, the previously reviewed Grammarian™ does that well. (*MacCompanion* October '03)
- Automatically using the first few words of a document for its title when I initially save it would be helpful. If there was a capability for doing this in the MW "Preferences", I missed it.
- Being able to create a default list of often-used fonts at the beginning of the main alphabetized font menu, as is possible in MS Word. I thought such a feature existed in MW, but I could not learn how to control it.
- It would be helpful to add an alternate font size (e.g., 11 point) to the default "size" menu, avoiding the dialog box game.
- Write won't export in any Word format, new or old. This may present a problem for some users. But exporting and sharing files in Rich Text Format (Write or Word variations) generally works well, because it's a universal format.
- Unlike MSW, where several toolbars can be visible at a time, MW users need to click on arrows to switch between them, because they occupy the same space. This is a bit different, but easy to get used to.
- I do miss the ability in MS Word to double-click and select an entire paragraph. Oh, well, back to mousing around.

Conclusions

Mariner Write 3.5.1 is on par with Word X for most of my word processing needs. According to the developer, it offers roughly 80% of the features of Microsoft Word at only 25% of the price. I agree with Kirk Hiner (September 29, 2002) at <http://www.AppleLinks.com/>, who, in his recent review, noted, "Mariner Write looks and feels like most people think a word processor should. MS Word users especially will be pleased at how easy it is to make the transition to Write, and WordPerfect users searching for an OS X compatible replacement need to look no further. The OS X interface is clean ... the familiar tools are easy to get to. Better yet, the feature set is not overdone. I know it sounds odd, but Mariner Writes strength comes in part from what it *can't* do. I use word processors to write, and Mariner Write is built to facilitate this. Reports, letters, memos, etc., Write is perfect for the task."

Hard-core Word and Excel users probably won't find just cause to switch, but Mariner Write offers enough to keep most users satisfied...even genuinely pleased.



Page Sender™ 3.1.1 FAX Software Review

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Smile Software
1-510-289-4000
support@smilesoftware.com
<http://www.smilesoftware.com/>
Download only, no physical shipment is available or needed.
\$30 USD, FREE upgrades (A voluntary upgrade fee of \$10 is requested from all registered users every six months or so, to allow continued development of Page Sender.)
System Requirements: Mac OS X version 10.1.3 or later (Tested with 10.2.8)



Strengths: Works with all Mac OS X applications using PDF technology.

Weaknesses: None.

Overview

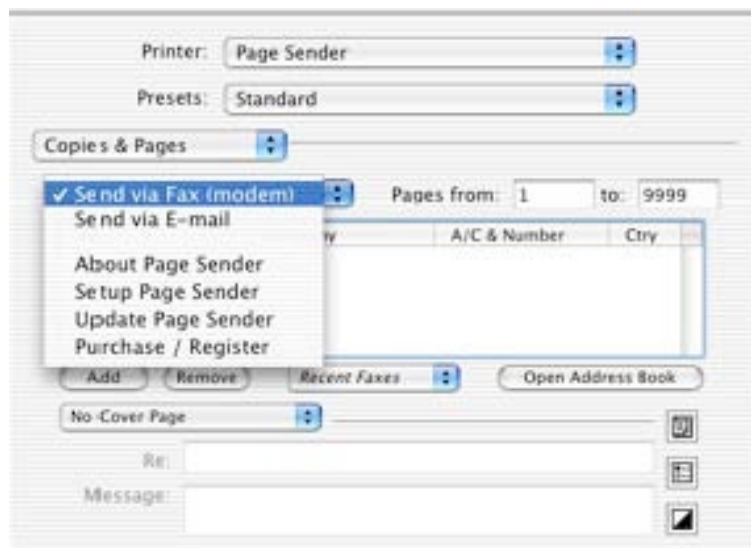
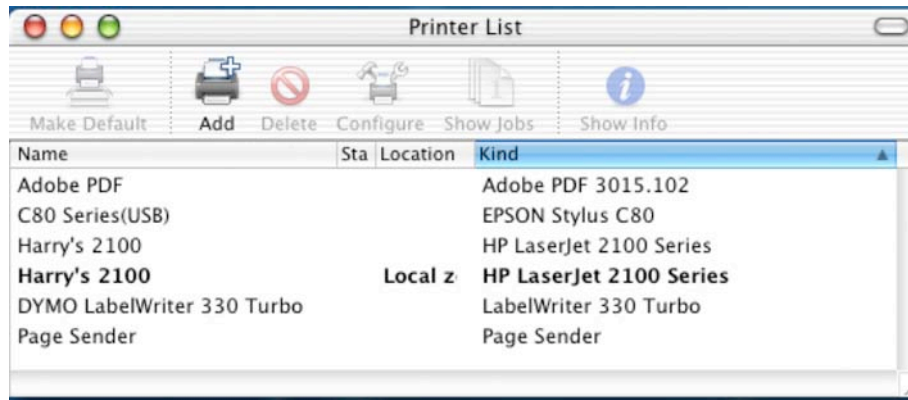
Page Sender is a fax application that acts as a quasi-printer driver, so you send a fax by "printing" it through your computer's internal modem. It also can be set up to use an external modem. Faxing is a simple matter of first selecting Page Sender from the Printer drop-down menu in the Print dialog. Then you enter details (e.g., name, company name, title, fax number) of the person you want to fax to into Page Sender's drop-down menu. Depending on how you've set up Page Sender, either your selected address book opens, allowing you to locate the recipient, or you can type a fax number directly into the dialog box. Once you are ready, a click of the Print button sends the fax.

Introduction

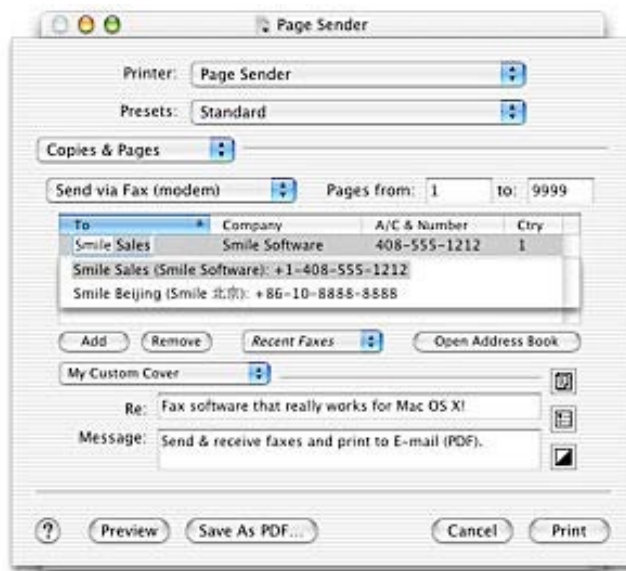
To keep peace in my home, I have two phone lines: one for the family, and the other for my hobbies and consulting efforts. The latter includes receiving and sending faxes. I have not been happy with, nor actively used any fax software since the, alas, long defunct Global Village™ Global FAX™. After countless attempt to get the Apple provided FAXstf software to work, I gave up faxing completely. Yes, I know that there are Internet-based fax service providers, but that's an expense I chose to forgo.

Then I read a review of this product, either in MacWorld or MacAddict (who remembers where ... details-details-details), I thought I'd give it a try. Initially, I had no luck in installing the downloaded software. In 20-20 hindsight, I'd filled out the set-up information incorrectly, so I

could send, but not receive, faxes. After missing a few very important faxes, and having the information sent via an attached e-mail, I decided to try again. So, with help for several local *macCompanion* staffers, and, by collectively, carefully reading all the installation procedures, we declared victory. What joy! Another "Who reads instructions?" victory! Once set up, using Page Sender became a no-brainer. I quickly noted that because of the changes in the way Mac OS X deals with printing and its address book, the interface to send faxes is a bit subtler than in Global Fax, but that is required by the Jaguar OS changes. And in the beginning ... in Global FAX, for pre-OS 9.x, pressing option-print in any document and either addressing a fax or choosing one from the fax address book was the way to go. Now it's all done in the print menu, an action all of us who own more than one output device do routinely.



I agree with the definition of requirements for fax software identified as review criteria in *MacWorld* and other publications. "Fax software must be at least as easy to use as a fax machine. Ideally, software setup should be painless, sending a fax should be as simple as printing a document, and receiving a fax should take no effort at all." Page Sender does this well, and does more, too.



Description and Features

Fax or e-mail anything you can print, directly from the print dialog. Page Sender can also receive faxes using your fax modem and automate sending & receiving faxes. The pathway that Apple's Print Center uses is to route your fax to the Page Sender is by way of Page Sender's "Fax Center" application. The latter controls sending faxes by phone or even by e-mails if so selected. The "Fax Center" window features a clean user interface that is modeled after Apple Mail. I still use Eudora™; everything works wonderfully through that e-mail client.

Page Sender Features Include:

- * Send faxes and (PDF) e-mails directly from the print dialog
- * Receive faxes using your fax modem
- * Print, e-mail, and even AppleScript received faxes
- * Live addressing with Address Book (Mac OS X 10.2 and later), Entourage™, Now Contact™ (v.4.2.5 and later), Outlook Express™, and Palm Desktop™ (v.4.1 and later)
- * Attach additional PDF documents when faxing
- * Use any font on your system (including Chinese, Japanese, Korean)
- * Automate sending of faxes and (PDF) e-mails via AppleScript
- * Available in English, Japanese, German, Italian, and French

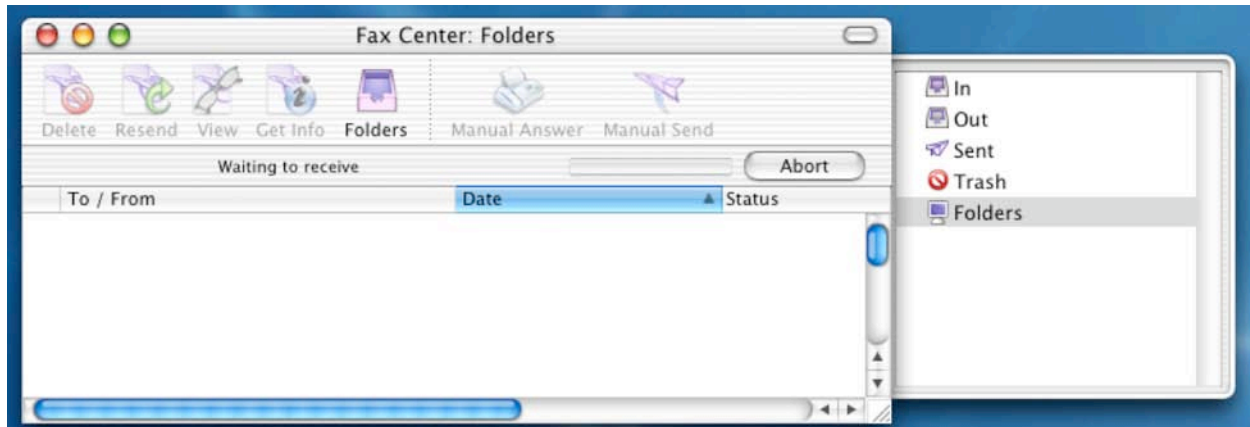
The sending of faxes is coordinated in the Page Sender Fax Center. It allows you to monitor faxes you've sent via fax modem, and to set Page Sender preferences. Its window presents a list of faxes you've both sent and received and their status. From the "Fax Sender" window, users can delete sent faxes, abort sending a given fax, resend a fax, get info, or view a received fax (as a PDF file). It also allows drag and drop support for making a copy of that fax to a selected folder on your hard disk. Although I was, admittedly, a slow learner, the individual options for Fax Center behavior are well defined in the ReadMe files that serve as both user manual and help files. They range in scope from installing Page Sender, setting up the software, and adding Page Sender to the Mac OS X Print Center, through how to use Page Sender's advanced features.

Another useful option is sending faxes as e-mail attachments. Should this be your preferred

mode of communicating, the Print dialog lets you choose that alternative, storing the document first as a PDF file, then creating a new e-mail message to the recipient with the "fax" attached. Some paid-for electronic fax services (e.g., eFax, jConnect, EasyLink, or MaxEmail) can also be accessed directly with Page Sender, sending an eMAIL to the service for their subsequent fax processing.

Page Sender uses PDF technology throughout the program. Incoming faxes appear as PDF files automatically, and sent files are converted to PDF before sending. As developed by Smile Software, Page Sender takes the hassle out of sending documents. Page Sender e-mails printouts as Portable Document Files (PDF), viewable with Adobe Acrobat™ or Reader™ on Windows, Mac, and Linux. E-mail your documents in a format anyone can read using your favorite e-mail client. Macintosh OS X users should also be pleased that Page Sender supports several well-known e-mail clients (Eudora, Entourage, Apple Mail, Claris EMailer) and personal information managers (Palm Desktop, Now Contact, Apple's address book, Eudora's address book).

The software also allows creation of folder in which to organize and store your faxes and a Fax History list that allows you to check fax activity.



Hey readers, so I huffed and puffed a bit getting this software set up. The results were worth every "dumb Harry" minute.

Conclusion

Jeffery Battersby noted in the May 2003 issue of MacWorld, "Fax software offers the perfect solution if you want to send faxes without buying an expensive, bulky fax machine. But in recent years decent fax applications for the Mac have been tough to find. Smith Micro's FAXstf X Pro has been available for about a year, but it's extremely limited." According to Battersby, "one application (MacWorld Tested) is a shining light in a field dominated by dim {fax} products."

After my initial installation tribulations I need to reassure you, our readers, that Page Sender is a stable, superbly designed program with excellent features. Its features are integrated well with both the Jaguar™ operating system and most Mac OS X compliant applications that you'll want to use it for all your fax needs. Hardware clutter be darned, bits and bytes finally save the day! The punch line ... Page Sender allows you to "print" any document, in one step, on your computer as an e-mail attachment. Now is the time, finally, to get *FAX happy!* The software is

powerful enough to cope with demanding fax needs, yet simple enough to use when only occasional faxing is wanted.

Some of the setup items requiring my system specific input were not intuitive, so I needed to very carefully read and reread all the setup procedures. In desperation, I and even had our *macCompanion* staff in for a *help Harry* session. Bottom-line, once set up using Page Sender becomes a no brainer. Its straightforward interface is a pleasure to use. The clean interface, and features is one that FAXstf (in addition to adding stability and enhancing functionality) would do well to try to emulate. Its additional powerful e-mail-associated features, which I have recently chosen to use, lend more power to the software. This reviewer agrees with other published reviewers I found on the Internet, that Page Sender is the very best general-purpose fax application for the Macintosh. If there are any significant shortcomings to Page Sender, once I successfully installed it, I couldn't find them.

Now if only Apple would take a hint, replace FAXstf ... Oh well, "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride." [Editor: Panther has a built-in Fax program now]

Your Ad could be here!



RagTime 5 Version 5.6.4 The professional business publishing software solution

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

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info@comgrafix.com
<http://www.comgrafix.com>

Updates: http://www.ragtime-online.com/link.cgi?free_updates

Free Version for non-commercial use: RagTime Solo

http://www.ragtime-online.com/link.cgi?download_rts_program

Extensions:

<http://www.ittersoft.de/>
<http://www.comgrafix.com>

Multilingual: Dutch, English, French, German with dictionaries for 12 languages.

Requirements: Optimal - Power Macintosh with Mac OS X version 10.2. Version 10.2.3 or later recommended. 120 MB free hard disk space for one language, 55 MB for each additional language. Cross-platform.

Euros and US Dollars \$ are considered "equivalent" for pricing



Strengths: Cross-platform, object-based, multilingual-capable professional Desktop Publishing application. The whole combined concept is that we don't create text or tables, but presentations.

Weaknesses: Hot-linking URLs. Remember, this is Desktop Publishing software that has an HTML converter.

purposes.

RagTime **Solo**; Free (\$25 USD for CD).

RagTime **5**; Education versions - \$95 USD, single license, \$375 5-user license. Commercial version, single license - \$695 USD, for the 5-user license - \$2,550 USD.

Extensions:

FileTime 4 Education version - \$50 USD Commercial - \$175 USD.

GeoInsight (OSX-only) Education version - \$195 USD, Commercial - \$295 USD.

MapGrafix 4.0.1 (OS 9-only) Education version - \$295 USD, Commercial - \$495 USD.

Johannes \$20 USD.

Martin's Power Functions about \$20 USD.

MetaFormula about \$60 USD.

Would you be interested in a professional Desktop Publishing (DTP) package that isn't subject to security risks and doesn't crash? And is multilingual? And Cross-platform? Okay, how about a free download (\$30 if the CD is ordered) for the individual or non-commercial single use environment? Well, you found it here with **RagTime** **5**.

Whether you begin with either the professional version or the individual non-commercial "free" version (Solo) of **RagTime** **5**, a "First Steps in RagTime" presentation appears and walks through how to use the product.

And why use it if you already have Microsoft Office ? Well, you *do* want to use a real Desktop Publishing program that can handle everything, and I mean practically *everything* in a "single page" environment, right?

Why fight layout in Word or Excel ? **RagTime** **5** lets me do texts, pictures, spreadsheets, charts, drawings and database manipulation all in one screen on an integrated single page. Of course, I had to get used to the concept of bringing in "containers" (frame orientation devices) and hooking them together in what is known as "pipelining", but once I learned that process, this became way too easy. I really mean this!

With **RagTime** **5**, I can include 3D business graphics, pictures, movies, sounds and interactive buttons. With add-on extensions from *Ittersoft*, I can do sophisticated math and database manipulation functions and from *ComGraphics* I can add mapping topology functionality.

Anything that requires business forms can be done with this package, whether those are simple memos or sophisticated books, budget plans, financials or other activities. Just about everything is completely integrated in the package. It doesn't act like it was formed by a committee and we don't have to "step out" of it to bring in the parts we need to make it work. The extensions become integrated immediately. No need to cut&paste, connect the dots or reimport other files any longer. After all, these German-based engineers have had over 15 years to perfect this product. And it appears that they have done a magnificent job moving this over to Mac OS X.

Expanding a document is easy enough and pages become "intelligent" so the inclusions are paginated properly. Oh, and AppleScripting is included, so repetitive tasks can be done automagically. Cataloging anyone?

And you'll love this, I know I did! All the containers allow for free rotation, scaling and skewing of all objects. And *everything* in a container is considered to be an object. There is also the ability to do Stylesheets and Master layouts. Text can be flowed around shapes. **RagTime** 5 is WorldScript II compatible and uses Unicode for worldwide document exchange. It also allows for automatic generation of index, table of contents and automatic footnotes.

Wait, there's more

Sometimes there is a "need" for 3D-spreadsheeting with cells that can serve as containers for all data types. Not only that, but several cells can be united even when physically far apart. With over 200 spreadsheet functions, it is all done here. Oh, and the *Ittersoft* extensions add even more functionality.

And this is the other part I like most about the product; the package creates an inventory listing all the components of a document, just like some sophisticated Computer Aided Design packages do with components and parts lists. Each listed object can be edited by double-clicking on it and drag&drop components can be moved or duplicated to or from documents or to the desktop. This alone sets this product apart from competitors.

The included 424-page hard-copy Reference manual (duplicated on-line in the Help menu) follows this process. Not only does it follow all the right literature-making rules, it provides such things as an Alphabetic Reference, Glossary, List of Topics and an Index. There are also separate Training Manuals for both Macintosh and Windows users too that are about 222 pages long. And they are step-by-step from simple to sophisticated and very nicely done. Watching the Start-up movie leads to and includes much of that, so if pressed for time...

So is **RagTime** 5 an island or can it interoperate with the rest of the world? The answer is that it interoperates nicely. It has a whole chapter (17) in the Reference guide dedicated to understanding importing and exporting, publishing and subscribing, dragging and dropping, exchanging data (converting) with other text, spreadsheets, drawings, pictures, images, programs and movies (like QuickTime). It also supports use of a bunch of 3rd party converters including adapters depending on the operating system being used – and those are listed along with more adapters for plaintext, Unicode, Rich Text Format, *Microsoft* products, and a list that looks reminiscent of GraphicConverter fame.

There are a few "exclusives" for the Mac OS however, **FileTime** 4 was added to interoperate with databases such as Filemaker Pro. And there are both **GeoInsight** (OS X – only) and **MapGrafix** (OS 9 – only) for doing topographical demographing.

And what you see on the screen will be what you see in print, whether those are business analyses, catalogs, periodicals, price lists, questionnaires, or sales documents – or anything else for that matter. Oh, and they can all become "living documents" too with dynamic linking. Make a change and if the pipelining is in place, changes to figures will automagically change graphs, charts, drawings or whatever. And because this is true DTP, spreadsheeting is also dynamic,

whether tabulating, changing fonts, or including paragraphs. No more "surprises" or snafus at the printer.

Next up; mini-descriptions of a few of the **extensions** from both *Ittersoft* and *ComGraphics*:

GeoInSight : mapping plug-in for creating linked thematic map info from FileMaker Pro, or spreadsheet demographics. Mac O X only.

Johannes: print routine process for stapled or folded brochures.

MapGrafix : Similar functions as for **GeoInSight**, but for OS 9 environments.

Martin's Power Functions: 18 spreadsheet calculation functions.

MetaFormula: spreadsheet pipeliner to convert between text and formulas.

Other homework

For PDFing, Acrobat Distiller is used. Save to PDF. Or "print" in Mac OS X.

Creating a Slideshow in **RagTime** 5, then copy/paste in **Keynote** could perhaps function better. Don't grab whole pages and expect them to fit in a **Keynote** window. Then again, if presentations can be done in a **RagTime** 5 slideshow, why move it to **Keynote** anyway? Well, okay, we know why. Yes, it can be done.

And URLs? Universal Resource Locator functionality is the only thing I haven't been able to get to work directly. The work-around is to export to HTML, or create links in a PDF after conversion. For example, In **Adobe Acrobat** 6, "Create Links" function works fine.

Another "in-depth" review can be found at ftp://ftp.comgrafix.com/ragtime_5_review.pdf.

I'm very excited about this product and its exposure to the Macintosh community! It provides a viable alternative to the ubiquitous *Microsoft Office* Suite. Granted, it does cost more if you are running a business, but it does a lot more, while taking up considerably less hard drive space. If you are going "Solo", then this is more than a bargain, it is a gift! Get it.



Silverfast Ai Version 6

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

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P.O. Box 9346

546 Bay Isles Road

Longboat Key,

FL -34228, USA

1-941-383-7496

info@SilverFast.com

<http://www.SilverFast.com/>

Download:

http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/imaging_3d/silverfastai.html

Pricing ranges from \$120 USD to \$820 USD depending on the device being supported. See

<http://www.nextag.com> for examples.

The book: <http://www.silverfast.com/show/sf-official-guide/en.html>

Works with MacOS 8.6 and later (PC version work with Windows 98, ME, 2000, XP,

with 64 MB RAM). For Mac OS X, requires 30 MB

Hard drive space, Adobe Photoshop.

DCProAi is the scan software for professionals

DCSE is a light version of Ai

DC is brilliant software light version

HDR is for editing and enhancing TIFF and Jpeg pictures

SilverFast Ai is already bundled with major

manufacturers such as Epson, Kodak, Polaroid, Nikon,

Microtek, Umax, Cruse, Seitz, Quatographic, PIE, PFU,

Pentacon Camera and works with over 120 other

scanners and digital cameras.



Strengths: Can be used as Twain interface or stand alone. Beautifully laid out excellent, well designed software. Tools, interface and scanning work exceeding well and very easy to use. Attractive and well laid out guidebooks in English and several other languages.

Weaknesses: Some scans require different tools to use to obtain the right corrections, but is part of the power of the software

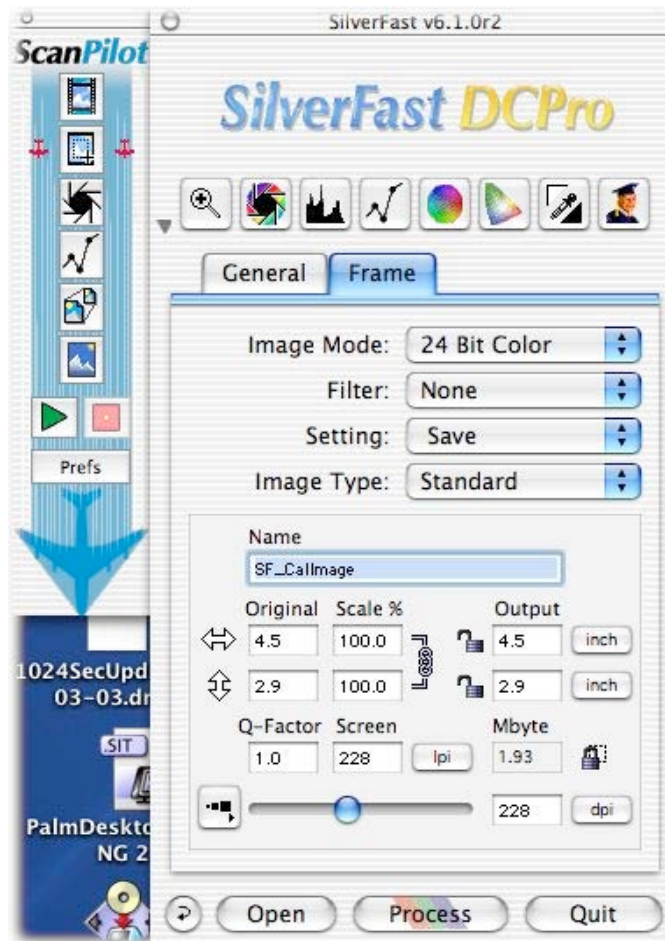
Scanner technology has become more sophisticated over the last few years. While the hardware systems have improved, the software used with the hardware has not made equivalent strides. Many of the software bundles that come with slide or regular scanners today are inadequate when giving the user a wide range of options and commands to scan and create images from either pictures, slides or negatives. Silverfast Ai Version 6 by LaserSoft imaging fills that void with stunning capabilities.

The product line offers several versions for imaging and scanning. The HDR Silverfast version is used for working with raw data (TIFF and JPEG photos) while the DC version is mostly for digital camera software operations and the SE version is a lesser version of DCpro used for scanning. Silverfast Ai version 6, considered the high end professional version, is used for full strength slide scanning.

This author, uses Silverfast Ai version 6 with a Nikon Coolscan 1000 slide scanner with an iMac. The software supports 150 types of scanners (Nikon, Epson, Kodak and many others including older scanners) and Mac OS X versions of Ai starting with Version 5 no longer supporting 68k processor Macintosh computers).

The attractive and well laid out instructional guide is 67 pages long and is divided up into sections for English (17 pages) , German, French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese. The extremely precise instructions and illustrations, some of the best I ever seen for software products (and that includes Apple software), guides you through the easy process for installation the software and then assisting your software through the use of your scanner and slides.

The installation of the Silverfast software starts with inserting the CD into the CD Rom drive, then double clicking on the flag icon that signifies the language you would like to access. The Photoshop (requires 5.02 or later) or "twain" once double clicked, brings up the installation file. The select command then copies the import folder into the Import folder, creating a Silverfast folder within (installation of the Photoshop and Twain are identical). All required files are copied from the CD onto your hard drive in that folder. After restarting, the interface can be used to begin your scanning adventure.



Silverfast Ai is well featured and clearly organized. The ScanPilot, (on the interface at the right), is a series of sequenced processing steps operated by the scanner. The green button starts the automatic operations while the red button stops the process. The operations can be resumed manually if desired.

By pressing the Prefs button at the bottom of the ScanPilot bar, the tools used by the ScanPilot can be customized to the needs of the scanning task. By clicking the check boxes besides the desired tool, certain operations are added or subtracted.

Selecting the Import command under File in the toolbar starts the scanning. I decided to use an older set of slides, which I had taken in 1972 taken during my expedition to see the total eclipse in Nova Scotia during 1972 . These slides from 1972 and the colors and various shades of white and lighter and darker colors would test the software capabilities.

Before the prescan, pressing command and the scan button, shows a pop-up window that allows for the changing of the output color. By clicking on the scan RGB, Colorsyn, CMYK or other depending upon whether you want to print the image, display on a website or other possibilities.

Once the image pops into the image window , the dashed area around the image can then be dragged in several directions to “frame” the exact portion (or the full size) of the slide. Clicking on other options under General (as illustrated by the eight icons on the top left) and Frames, allows further customization of the scan. Image dimensions can be changed for the image. The

scale size can be altered to select the image size for your intended use of the scanned image. By dragging the slide bar on the bottom, the dpi (dots per inch) can be increased or decreased and the printing screen setting size above this slider bar can be modified to set the printing screen.

In Image Type, auto adjust can be chosen to optimize the scanned image. There is a wide range of options in the pull down menu for the scanning of landscape, skin tones, show, night, evening, shadow casts. If the image type is not changed, the auto-adjust (second from the left) takes over and adjusts the highlights, midtones and the shadows automatically.

The next two icons, assist with the correction and adjustment of brightness or darkness. A gradation Dialog box pops up and the slider bars on the bottom can altered or numbers placed in the reading small windows. This allows for experimenting. If you like the changes you have made, these can be saved. If not, the undone command wipes out that sequence and you can start over as many times as needed.

Selective color correction (sixth and seventh from the left) is most helpful for adjusting the tones and the hues of your scan. The Silverfast intuitive nature recognizes the colors in the image and sets the color in the center of the color circle. By clicking on the bottom or the top of the HSB controls (the right vertical bars) and holding the mouse button down, the hue, saturation or luminance of the color can be modified to create more authentic coloration.

The Color Circle is an interesting and flexible way to make corrections. When clicking on any of the RGBCMY color circle icons, little arrows extend away from the inner colored circle toward the various color selected. This allows for working with the different colors available in the scan, one at a time and seeing the results.

Another valuable filter tool, unsharp mask, helps to “sharpen” parts of the image. First the scale and resolution need to be set. Then click on prescan and select the portion to make a sharper image. The slider bars can be used to alter the intensity and threshold, the pixel size. Once clicked, the original to the sharpened image can be compared. Either approve the effect or reset and start over.

I was very satisfied with the images that were processed using Silverfast. I was impressed with the flexibility and the relatively ease of use of the software and the way that the software allowed me to make the most use of my older scanner.

The well-defined features and easy to locate tools, made the scanning process fun. I tried the scanner and the software with negatives and various slides and was most pleased with the results. The color renditions were very good . The use of the other features made for good scans which I were able to post to my website. Of course, some of the results took some trials, to produce but such is the nature of using graphic oriented software. However Silverfast Ai Version 6 made the process flexible enough to be able to test and compare results and then start over or reset if desired. With each reprocessing, the learning process increases. Learning comes about through trials and errors but also through the intuitive use and comparing the results completed through the use of the myriad of tools that this program offers.

Whether you have an old or new scanner (slide or regular scanner), and working with a novice or expert user, the Silverfast software can help you. Easy to use, this well documented and

comprehensive set of tools, make the whole process fun, instead of a chore. Instead of a laborious set of complicated operations and dealing with poor software, Silverfast can help you become more productive with your images in many ways. I recommend this software highly for all your scanning needs.

Your Ad could be here!



VINC v1.7™ (VIEW, NAVIGATE & CONVERT)

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

RecoSoft™ Corporation

Osaka, Japan

<http://www.recosoft.com/> (File Size: 3.2M)

\$49 USD, Education Single User License \$40 USD

Discounts are available for multi-pack education licenses

VINC v1.7 Upgrade License (from v1.0 and v1.2) \$30 USD

System Requirements For Mac OS X — OS: Mac OS X 10.1 or higher

The software is also available for pre-OS X operating systems.

A Web browser is required for the "Layout Preview" mode in VINC to function.



Strengths: Acts like a combo GraphicConverter - MacLinkPlus program.

Weaknesses: Does not convert WordPerfect or password-protected documents yet.

VINC (VIEW, NAVIGATE & CONVERT) is RecoSoft's integrated disk navigation, document viewing, and conversion application. As I easily confirmed, "VINC, according to its developer, provides an integrated all-in-one interface for disk navigation, quick viewing of files, and a file conversion. VINC is designed to solve common document exchange problems encountered as a result of cross platform environments, including those in both inter- and intranet environments. VINC users can quickly view the text of word processing documents and the image of many graphics files without further possessing or using the original application it was created in." The software is accompanied by a 43-page heavily illustrated electronic PDF user guide that has proven quite helpful to me.

From this reviewer's perspective, in the specific software types supported, VINC provides a very capable low-cost alternative to the combined use of GraphicConverter™ and MacLink Plus™. It has the added benefits of making batch conversion of large number of files easy, and retaining both imbedded graphics (including the WMF format) and highly formatted text so often found in complex documents.

This review was created in a fashion that differed from my usual macCompanion practice. I had permission to review VINC 1.2; but that review was delayed by other macCompanion items I had received prior VINC 1.7. Because of problems with v.1.2, partly resulting from my misconceptions of the software's overall abilities and limitations, I had established a good working dialog with Paul Chadha, my technical contact with RecoSoft Corporation. After several back and forth e-mail dialogs, in which Paul resolved all my concerns and uncertainties, he suggested I wait about 30 days until version 1.7 was released.

So, this review augments my initial impressions of v.1.2, supplemented by my experience in v.1.7. The new features and improvements added or enhanced in v.1.7 have resolved many of my initial concerns with the former limits of the software. Unlike other software solutions that convert files within and between platforms (Macintosh and Windows), VINC has exceptional multilingual document viewing and conversion support including document conversions (not translation) in English, Western European, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Cyrillic, and Central European language text transfer only in word processing documents while retaining the "formatting" integrity of those files.

RecoSoft has designed VINC to perform extremely accurate data conversion between different word processing document types, graphics files, and text files, including e-mail attachments. The software can convert word processing documents containing imbedded graphics while maintaining almost all the formatting in the original documents. The imbedded graphics supported formats are PICT, WMF, JPEG, GIF, TIFF, and WMF when embedded in MS Word, RTF, or AppleWorks documents. In addition, with MS Word, retained document information and formatting attributes include styles, paragraph indentation, headers, footers, sections, tables, endnotes/footnotes, and OLE embedded data such as Excel spreadsheets, charts, and PowerPoint graphics.

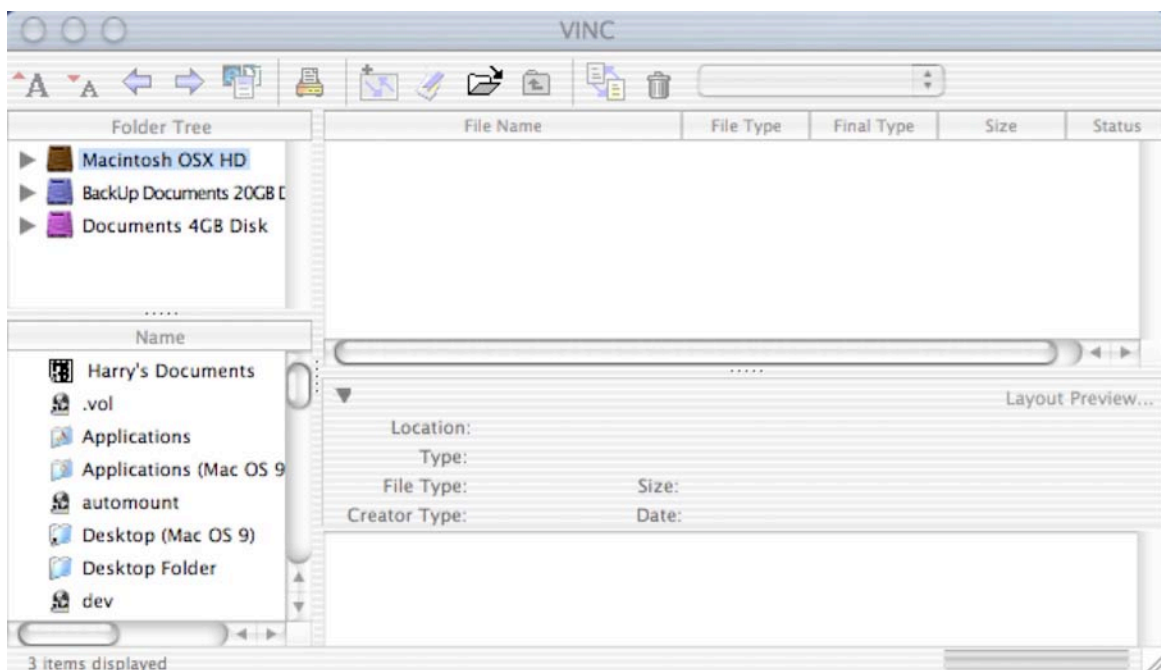
The present version can convert files in and from many Macintosh and Windows word processing programs. This includes MS Word, RTF, and AppleWorks, as well as the Japanese RecoWrite™ software from RecoSoft Corp. AppleWorks File Format enhancements in version 1.7 include retaining Footnotes/Endnotes and inline AppleWorks Graphics, in addition to most of the usual style elements mentioned for MS Word. It also effectively serves to view the text and the layout of documents created in word processing applications not on your computer.

In our dialogs, Paul Chadha also mentioned that word processors that use an underlying RTF format, such as Mariner Write™, could also be converted by VINC, an attribute I did not test. VINC has not yet released translators, called filters, for Nisus Writer™, Word Perfect™, and MS Works™, but these are planned. As a recipient of many Word Perfect documents, this limitation was disappointing since I've had significant difficulty getting accurate conversion both in MS Word and MacLinks Plus™. At this time, VINC does not yet effectively translate documents that are password protected.

Feature List

- View the contents of a PDF file and convert PDF files into other formats.
- Convert documents from one file format to another.
- Retain the layout, attributes, tables, and characteristics in the converted files.
- Convert Macintosh files to Windows files or vice versa.
- Supports over 65 Macintosh and Windows file types.
- View and convert Windows document files.
- View and convert graphic files.
- Convert Macintosh files to Windows files or vice versa.
- Navigate through all volumes available to the computer from within the VINC user interface window.
- Print documents from within VINC.
- Automatically create a conversion report.
- Batch convert multiple files.
- Display information regarding unsupported types.
- Set source and destination folders for single or batch conversions.
- Set rules for default automatic conversion.
- Drag-n-drop files to convert them.

The VINC Main User Interface



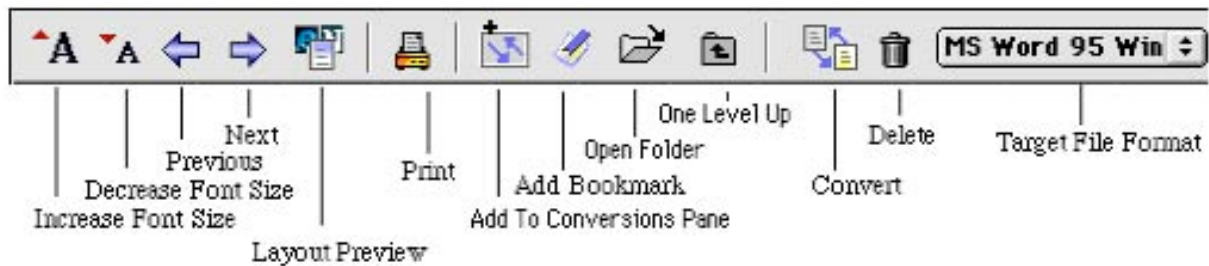
After booting the software, the user sees the window containing the user interface. Below the VINC tool bar, the main VINC window is divided into five functional panes. The upper left hand side contains a folder tree, comparable to the list view in the finder. In addition, just below it, the bottom window portion displays the contents of the selected folder in list view. The upper portion of the right hand screen (called the conversion pane lists the specific items selected for conversion. Below that there is a small pane with "get info" type information for each selected item chosen with you mouse. The remaining lower right hand portion of the screen, called the preview pane, can be used for viewing the selected document's contents in text format.

Using VINC

VINC converts a file to a different type by utilizing the contents of the original file. During the conversion process, the original file is not modified or altered in any way. To convert selected files using the Conversions pane, you must first add them into this pane. Several methods exist for adding files into the Conversions pane. You can drag and drop files from the Desktop into the Conversions pane, or you can double-click a file listed in the folder tree panel and select the file from the folder contents window. VINC offers two methods for converting files, using the Conversions pane or using the Batch Convert feature. I'll leave a description of batch conversion to the User Guide reader; as expected, I had no problems using this feature.

Tool Bar

The Tool Bar contains the following icon buttons.



Converting files using the Conversions pane involves adding files into the conversions pane, setting the target file type, and then dragging and dropping the files from the Conversions pane to the Desktop. The steps required are clearly described in the VINC 1.7 User Guide. Depending on whether you elect to convert a word processing document or a graphic file, VINC automatically selects, for your consideration, the available applicable filters.

Conversion Attributes and More

The scope of conversion depends on each individual file format filter. The following list generally identifies attributes that are typically converted:

- Paragraph Attributes (indents, spacing etc.)
- Character Attributes (font, size, style, color, background color)
- Page (breaks/column, breaks/section, breaks)
- Columns (fixed/variable width)
- Headers/Footers
- Tables (inline tables, complex tables, merged cells etc.)
- Table Cell Attributes (vertical/horizontal direction, borders etc.)
- Graphics (inline and floating graphics) and native format drawings
- Style Sheets (MS Word style sheets do get applied to the data)
- Document Margins
- Date/Time/Page Number get converted to TEXT
- Preset Tab (tab markers)

Supported English language word processing file formats are tabulated below.

File Formats	Conversion Type	Platform
AppleWorks 4.0	Read & Write	Macintosh/Windows 95, 98, NT, 2000
AppleWorks 5.0	Read	Mac/Win
AppleWorks 6.0	Read & Write	Mac
MS Word 95/97/2000/XP/2003	Read & Write	Win
MS Word 6.0/98/2001/X	Read & Write	Mac
RTF 1.0 – 1.7	Read & Write	Mac/Win
Text	Read & Write	Mac/Win/UNIX
HTML up to v. 3.2	Write	Mac/Win
Unicode (UTF-8/16)	Read & Write	All Platforms
HTML - UTF8	Write	Mac/Win
Online information provides detailed information document conversion for other languages.		

Stand Alone Graphics Formats Converted by VINC 1.7

Read	Read From (To Show Image)	And Convert To any of these Formats
QuickDraw GX	BMP	BMP
JPEG	JPEG	JPEG
GIF (can't convert to)		
MacPaint	MacPaint	MacPaint
Photoshop 2.5 – 3.0	Photoshop 2.5 – 3.0	Photoshop 2.5 – 3.0 (For more recent versions of Photoshop™ some accuracy is lost.)
PICT	PICT	PICT
PNG	PNG	PNG
QuickTime Image	QuickTime Image	QuickTime Image
TGA	TGA	TGA
TIFF	TIFF	TIFF
QuickDraw GX	QuickDraw GX	QuickDraw GX
BMP	BMP	BMP

VINC v1.7: The Underlying Technology

According to RecoSoft, the software itself is composed of two primary parts. These are the user interface presentation layer and the translation architecture. Earlier I have described the user interface. According to RecoSoft, "The translation architecture is based on a plug-in technology. This means that the actual translators that convert from a particular file type to another are plug-ins (i.e., self-contained external modules found in the VINC application folder -> Filters folder)." The types of files that VINC can read or write is presently limited only by the filters (plug-ins) that are presently available. According to Paul Chadha, RecoSoft continues to work on adding new filters, as well as on enhancing the capabilities of its existing filters, a fact I could easily

verify from upgrading from v.1.2 to v.1.7. Thus, updates and new translators can be easily added and utilized as they are developed. Registered users are notified by eMAIL of upgrades and feature that enhance the software.

Conclusions

Although I initially found the VINC multi-pane interface awkward, after working with VINC for an hour, the inherent structure of the interface became as easy to use as another of my file conversion favorites, GraphicConverter. I made a few side-by-side translations using VINC for both graphics and word processing modes, graphics conversion using GraphicConverter, and word processing conversions using MacLinks Plus, both of which are part of my software tool set. To test word processing capabilities, I used a MS Word technical report containing both embedded images and graphics, and a simpler report I created in AppleWorks 6.x. I found the VINC conversions superior for complex documents with embedded elements, and of unquestionable quality for straightforward graphics and word processing documents. Not being a PhotoShop user, I did not test VINC capabilities with that file type.

I found only two items that would detract from my dedicated use of VINC. First, I still receive and download many WordPerfect files, for which RecoSoft has not yet developed a filter. In addition, although inherent in Adobe Acrobat™, the ability to convert graphics files would appear to be a desired enhancement, since many of our readers use only Acrobat Reader™. At present, VINC can read and extract only formatted text from PDF documents. Paragraphs are re-created wherever possible, and font information is, where possible, also retained.

I have added VINC to my arsenal of file conversion tools and eagerly await new or enhanced filters from the publishers. Word Perfect, please!

Well, that's it for this issue of *macCompanion*. Thanks for taking time to visit with us and we hope it was a pleasant experience! Be sure and visit often, check out our links to other sites, buy something from our affiliates and spread the good word about *macCompanion*.